

ABSTRACT

Title of Dissertation: EXPLORING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN
PERSONAL MOTIVATION, PERSISTENCE, AND
RESILIENCE AND THEIR EFFECTS ON
ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT AMONG DIFFERENT
GROUPS OF AFRICAN-AMERICAN MALES IN
HIGH SCHOOLS

Linda Delois Salley, Doctor of Education, 2005

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This study investigated the extent to which differences in motivation, persistence, and resilience exist among academically achieving African-American males enrolled in high school in a mid-Atlantic suburban public school system. The research questions sought to identify quantitative and qualitative variables that might contribute to academic success.

The two groups of participants in this study were tenth and eleventh grade African-American males enrolled in the general curriculum or in honors and/or advanced placement classes. All participants were maintaining a 2.5 grade point average and all high schools in the district were represented in the study. The Achievement Motivation Profile instrument was administered to 140 academically

achieving African-American males. Ten percent of the sample population responded to twelve interview questions.

The study tested three research hypotheses: (1) there are no statistically significant differences in the mean levels of motivation between two groups of African-American males with different academic achievement records; (2) there are no statistically significant differences in the mean levels of persistence between two groups of African-American males with different academic achievement records; (3) There are no statistically significant differences in the mean levels of resilience between two groups of African-American males with different academic achievement records. T-tests and analysis of variance were used to make comparisons between the two groups.

Findings from the current study revealed no statistically significant differences in means in motivation, persistence and resilience. Four themes emerged from the interviews of African-American males enrolled in honors or advanced placement high school classes. These themes were: (1) determined and persistent parental engagement; (2) setting limits and discipline; (3) child-focused love, support, communication and modeling; and (4) community connectedness and resources.

Suggestions are made to replicate the study in an urban setting, again using African-American male honors and general curriculum students; to replicate the study in a rural area where three groups of African-American male students are identified: honors, general, and a group who are performing poorly in the general curriculum.; and to replicate the study using African-American females as the subjects in a similar environment. Additionally, it is important to continue searching the literature for an instrument more sensitive to differences between levels of motivation, persistence and resilience than the Achievement Motivation Profile.

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ACHIEVEMENT AMONG DIFFERENT GROUPS OF AFRICAN-AMERICAN
MALES IN HIGH SCHOOLS

by

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Dissertation submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School of the
University of Maryland, College Park in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Education
2005

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DEDICATION

This dissertation, which is the culmination of many hours spent in study, is dedicated with love to my family, especially my nieces, Tonya, Siobhan, and Michelle, and my nephew, Juwan. I love you so very much!

Thanks, Mom and Dad, for the gift of life and unwavering love and support. To Dean, Celestine, and Christine, thanks for being in my corner. Thanks for the joy and the personal growing opportunities. To all in my extended family and circle of friends, I thank you.

To God be the glory. Great things He has done!

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

First and foremost, I offer praise and thanksgiving to the Creator from whom all blessings flow.

I gratefully acknowledge the contributions of several individuals who, by their assistance and encouragement, helped me to make this educational journey a reality. I am deeply appreciative and indebted to my advisor and chairperson, Dr. Thomas Weible, who believed in the value of this work, for the hours spent guiding the completion of this dissertation, and for his willingness to serve as my advisor. Dr. Weible, your sensitive attention to cognitive and non-cognitive occurrences is immeasurable.

I also extend appreciation to the members of my advisory committee: Dr. Gilbert Austin, Dr. Francine Hultgren, Dr. Martin Johnson, and Dr. Hanne Mawhinney, for their scholarship, insights, and thoughtful guidance. I thank you for your timely and constructive comments and suggestions. You have given generously of your time and advice in a warm, caring environment that "lit the fire of personal motivation, persistence, and resilience to birthing this dissertation."

To all middle school and high school students, teachers, and parents in the public school system who participated in this study, I extend sincere appreciation. A special thanks is extended to one principal, one vice-principal, two teachers, and one director who went the "extra mile" to assist me in gaining the cooperation of the students and parents needed to complete this study: Mrs. Jervic Petty, Mrs. Crystal Benson, Mr. Phillipe Avery, Ms. Linda Burney, and my very special friend, Dr. Minnie Reynolds, director of minority achievement and multicultural education.

Finally, very special thanks to my immediate family and extended family.

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CHAPTER I

BACKGROUND AND INTRODUCTION

There have been many endeavors to discover variables that seem to underpin academic achievement of African-Americans. For nearly a century, researchers have studied academic performance in people without equal access to schooling and with low academic achievement. Investigations have focused on determining relationships between institutional practice and structures, culture, and demographic status, as it relates to academic achievement. Researchers concluded that academic achievement for African-Americans is related to intellectual ability, access, equality, financial resources, personality, independence, and self-esteem (Finn, 1989; Guggenheim, 1969; Horn & Chen, 1998; Lavin, 1965; McNeal, 1995, 1997; Schunk, 1989, 1996; Washington, 1901; Woodson, 1933).

Ladson-Billings (1994) addressed the elusiveness of academic achievement among African-Americans. She stated that:

the quest for quality education remains an elusive dream for the African-American community. However, it does remain a dream—perhaps the most powerful for the people of African descent of this nation. (p. ix)

Researchers from Woodson (1933) to Rowan (1996), support the concept that quality education is an honored right for African-Americans because education is associated with social and economic gains. Furthermore, Banks (1996) took the position that educational failure is associated with legal denial of access to education. Quality

education simply means attitudinal accessibilities to counter educational failure among all students, with focus on African-American males.

Researchers have investigated academic achievement of African-American males to identify variables that may provide or impede academic achievement, and variables that provide insights into how academic achievement is sustained (Astin, 1982; Graham, 1994; Hrabowski, 1991; Hrabowski & Maton, 1995; James, 1990; Nettles, 1991). These researchers reported that academic achievement is associated with non-cognitive as well as cognitive variables. For example, non-cognitive variables such as school climate and environment (Dezman, 1995) and cognitive variables such as grade point average and high school class ranking (Astin, 1982) were associated with academic achievement. Researchers have studied the relationship between non-cognitive and cognitive variables in academic achievement for the purposes of improving academic achievement for all students; yet, with particular emphasis on African-American males (Butler, 1992; Clark, 1983; Comer & Poussaint, 1990).

The plight of young African-American males in public educational systems has been a growing concern for educators, parents and human service professionals. While some African-American males appear to be losing in the battle to grow and survive in the United States, there appears to be a positive change in this trend. African-American males have suffered acute reactions to living in a predominantly Eurocentric culture and society (Ascher, 1991; Dates & Barlow, 1990; Gill, 1992; Irvin, 1990; Madhubuti, 1980; Marable, 1990; Maryland Commission on Black Males, 1998; Wilson & Banks, 1994). Past research suggests that "(a) consensus of all national and local employment and educational statistics indicates a bleak situation for Black males..." (Garibaldi, 1992; Gill, 1992; Maryland Governor's Commission on Black Males, 1992, p. 10).

Among the negative indicators that affect a substantial share of African-American males' likelihood of surviving in the United States are employment statistics, homicide rates, and last-place ranking on many educational and attainment performance measures (Finn, 1989; Garibaldi, 1992; Gill, 1992; Maryland Commission Report on Black Males, 1992, 1998; Nettles & Perna, 1997; Slaughter, 1974). Several scholars documented that African-American males were more likely than members of other racial and gender categories to show greater disparities in education, employment, poverty levels, family disintegration, criminal status, and health rates (Ascher, 1991; Garibaldi, 1992; Gill, 1992; Jordon & Cooper, 2000; Wilson & Banks, 1994).

For instance, in March 2002, among the 216.8 million members of the civilian population aged 16 and over, 25.4 million (12%) were Black and non-Hispanic White. Non-Hispanic White men had a higher civilian labor force participation rate than Black men (73% compared with 68%). The unemployment rate for African-American males was twice that for non-Hispanic White males (11% and 5%, respectively) (U. S. Census Bureau, 2002). During that same time, the State of Maryland reported an overall unemployment rate of 4.3%. The African-American unemployment rate was 7.3% compared to the White male unemployment rate of 3.6% (U. S. Census Bureau, 2002).

African-American males consistently scored lowest among all public school students on all measures of academic standards. For instance, of the 20.4 million Blacks and 133.4 million non-Hispanic Whites 25 and older, a lower percentage of Blacks had earned at least a high school diploma (79% and 89%, respectively). The proportion of all non-Hispanic Whites with at least a bachelor's degree (29%) was higher than that of all Blacks (17%) (U. S. Census Bureau, 2002).

Negative indicators became so commonplace that many researchers and educators viewed the majority of these young men's future as hopeless and impossible to salvage (Garibaldi, 1992; Gill, 1992). Various reports and articles addressing the issue surrounding African-American males consistently cited incidents of the African-American males' plight (Dates & Barlow, 1990; Gill, 1992). In light of these studies, African-American males are considered as members of an "at-risk" population.

When the term "at risk" is applied to students, two factors are generally considered. The first is the predictive concept that considers background and social and emotional characteristics to identify students who are "at risk" (Richardson & Colfer, 1990). Such indicators might include low socioeconomic status, low educational attainment levels of either parent, a single-parent household, minority status, or an individual's predisposition such as being handicapped (ERS Bulletin, 1991; Researching At-Risk Families, 1991; Self, 1985). The second factor considers problematic behaviors exhibited in schools. Indicators might be low grades, grade retention, truancy, non-participation in co-curricular activities, and disruptive behaviors (Richardson & Colfer, 1990).

Numerous studies provide descriptors of the characteristics of at-risk students (Strassburger, Rosen, Miller & Chavez, 1990; Ogbu, 1989). To be at risk, a young person may be chemically dependent, a runaway, suicidal, pregnant, economically disadvantaged, a minority, or a school dropout. By virtue of the fact that African-American males are a minority, they are members of an "at-risk" population.

Given the descriptors of at-risk students and the current status of African-American males, it appears that African-American males from an educational perspective are an "endangered species." However, while African-American males are considered "at-risk," some African-American males are achieving academically and "defying the odds" (Geary, 1988; Hrabowski, 1991; Hrabowski & Maton, 1995). The

students who "defy the odds" and achieve academically can be viewed as students operating from the strength-based model (Natriello, Dill, & Pallas, 1990) as opposed to the deficit model, which basically blamed the student for environmental factors over which they had no control. What, then, are considered to be the strength-based variables associated with academically achieving at-risk African-American males?

The *motivation* of African-American students who refuse to quit involves personal stories of inspiration, opportunities within the school to excel, personal interest in academic achievement and the desire to obtain goals of which education was the key (Braddock, Royster, Winfield, & Hawkins, 1991; Geary, 1988, Graham, 1994; Hrabowski, 1991; Hrabowski & Maton, 1995; Valencia, 1994; Winfield, 1991). Therefore, personal educational aspirations and personal academic investment are seen as indicators of students' attitudinal and behavioral attachment to conventional academic values (Braddock et al., 1991; Geary, 1988; Valencia, 1994). These measures appear to be based on students' own decisions about what they would strive to accomplish academically, how their previous investment paid off, and whether they believe that continuous academic pursuit is worthwhile (Braddock, Royster, Winfield, & Hawkins, 1991). Spencer, Seaton, and Harpalani (2000) linked this relationship to "the cognitive and affected-linked psychological processes" (p. 4).

While the research is scarce in determining personal academic attributes and motivational factors held by academically achieving African-American males, there appears to be a growing body of research examining variables associated with academically successful minority students (Allen, 1985; Braddock et al., 1991; Clark, 1983; Gill, 1992, 2000; Jordon & Cooper, 2001; Ogbu, 1988; Spencer, Seaton, & Harpalani, 2000).

Although much research literature suggests that young African-American males are particularly at risk of school failure, one contributing factor is the risk of not

becoming attached to academic goals. Several studies concluded that African-American males began their studies with high levels of enthusiasm, yet lost their earlier enthusiasm over time and responded less and less to academic demands (Garibaldi, Jones & Brooks, 1988; Simmons & Grady, 1990). Academic resignation seems to set in after initial difficulties go unnoticed or unassisted, to the point that eventually students no longer hold enough attachment to academic goals to make educational plans or affect academic success strategies. Therefore, an individual's sense of success and accomplishment is denied (Spencer, Seaton, & Harpalani, 2000).

Plans and aspirations are also related to later educational attainment among African-American males (Geary, 1988; Wilson-Sadberry, Winfield, & Royster, 1991; Winfield, 1991). Geary (1988) found that those African-American students who "defied the odds" and who were successful academically in high school were found to have good attitudes and expended a great deal of effort in academic pursuit. They displayed a belief in self, participated in class and extracurricular activities (particularly athletics for African-American males), exhibited good coping skills, and demonstrated self-motivation and determination (Braddock et al., 1991; Geary, 1988; Winfield, 1991).

Upon examining the literature associated with academically successful African-American males, in addition to *motivation*, two terms surfaced within the body of research. Academic *resilience* and academic *persistence* were cited as possible variables influencing academic achievement among students (Braddock, 2000; Cunningham & Spencer, in press; Dupree, Spencer & Bell, 1997; Martin, 1985; Mutter, Spencer, 1995, 1999; Rutter, 1987; Swanson & Petersen, 1998; Young & Monk, 1969, 1992).

Resilience is a term generally found in the health and psychiatric field that denotes risk behaviors. Rutter (1987) stated that "Resilience was concerned with

individual variations in response to risk ... (which) cannot be seen as a fixed attribute of the individual" (p. 317). Simply put, resilience is the ability to "bounce back" from adversity, to overcome the negative influences that often block academic achievement (Braddock et al., 1991; Rutter, 1987; Werner, 1988; Winfield, 1991). Resilience, then, alters as the circumstances change. A student's personal decision to remain in school, for example, may be an example of an individual's resilience during critical traditional periods.

At the beginning of the century, persistence behavior received considerable attention (Cathcart & Dawson, 1928; Fernald, 1912; McDougall, 1908). However, it was Howell's (1933) work that spearheaded considerable research in psychology. Ryan's (1939) review of the literature on early persistence suggested that persistence behaviors and success were inseparably bound. More recently, persistence again has surfaced as one of the most frequently mentioned attributes of academically successful students. Two interpretations were offered. In some studies, persistence meant staying power versus dropping out or being dismissed because of academic failure or other administrative reasons (Martin, 1985; Mock & Yonge, 1969; Mutter, 1992). In other studies, persistence represented personal attributes of academically oriented students. In this sense, persistence referred to personal attributes held by an individual in the completion of a task. Simply put, persistence was the ability to "exert effort" toward the completion of a task.

The literature seemingly suggests that non-cognitive behaviors associated with resilience and persistence influence cognitive behaviors associated with completing a task. The task in this sense might be meeting the standard associated with academic achievement. Therefore, this study seeks to investigate non-cognitive and cognitive variables among academically achieving African-American males.

Statement of the Problem

The purpose of this study was to investigate the extent to which differences in motivation, persistence and resilience existed between two groups of African-American high school males. One group consisted of African-American male tenth and eleventh grade students enrolled in a general curriculum and maintaining a B or above average. The other group was high-achieving African-American males in tenth and eleventh grades who were enrolled in honors courses or advanced placement courses. More specifically, this study's intent was to investigate cognitive and non-cognitive variables that might influence the academic achievement of these two groups.

Research Questions

Through this research, the following questions were addressed:

1. Are there differences in the levels of motivation between two groups of African-American males with different academic achievement records?
2. Are there differences in the levels of persistence between two groups of African-American males with different academic achievement records?
3. Are there differences in the levels of resilience between two groups of African-American males with different academic achievement records?
4. What are the reasons for success given by African-American males in honors or advanced placement classes, related to motivation, persistence, and resilience?

With the approval of her committee, the researcher has chosen the Achievement Motivation Profile (AMP) (Mandel, Friedland, & Marcus, 1996). The AMP was initially developed in 1982 to fill the need for a multidimensional personality test specifically designed for educational evaluation. The AMP is designed for use with students ages 14 and older, in high school, junior college, and

college settings. The AMP and its use are discussed in greater detail in Chapter 3, Methodology. Historically, from elementary to post-secondary education, the academic performance and completion rates are lower than other racial groups (Allen, Epps, & Haniff, 1991). Table 1 highlights the years of school completed. The decade of the 1960s was chosen for the benchmark because the Civil Rights Act was passed as well as were the Elementary and Secondary Education Acts. These acts are significant to the history of education in the United States.

In 1960 for the total population, 41% of males and 42% of females graduated from high school; 7.7% male and 5.8% female students graduated from college. In the same year, for white non-Hispanic males, the number for high school was 43.2% and for females, it was 44.7%. For college graduates it was 8.6% males and 6% females.

For African-American male high school graduates, it was 39.6%, and for females, 41.7%. For African-American college graduates, it was 3.5% for males and 3.5% for females. For both groups, less than 45% of the population were high school graduates, a surprising number compared to the numbers for 2003. By 2003 both white non-Hispanic and African-American students had made impressive increases in rates of graduation from both high school and college. The percentage of increase from 1960 to 2003 for white non-Hispanic high school males was 108% and for college, 247%. For high school female graduates, it was 101% and for college, 357%. For African-American male high school graduates it was 100% and for college, 389%. For females, it was 92.5% for high school and 397% for college. However, the gap between white non-Hispanic and African-American students had grown. For high school graduates, the difference for males was 7% and for females, 6.7%. For college graduates, the difference was 7.6% for males and 7.1% for females, which was greater than in 1960.

Table 1

Percentage of Persons Age 25 and Above by Years of School Completed, Race/Ethnicity, and Gender

Years	Total Population						White, Non-Hispanic						African-American					
	Male			Female			Male			Female			Male			Female		
	H.S.	Bac.	H.S.	H.S.	Bac.	H.S.	H.S.	Bac.	H.S.	Bac.	H.S.	Bac.	H.S.	Bac.	H.S.	H.S.	Bac.	H.S.
1960	41.1	7.7	42.5	5.8	43.2	8.6	44.7	6.0	39.6	3.5	41.7	3.5	39.6	3.5	41.7	3.5	3.5	3.5
1970	55.2	11.0	55.4	8.2	57.4	11.6	57.7	8.6	52.1	6.8	54.7	5.6	52.1	6.8	54.7	5.6	5.6	5.6
1980	68.6	17.0	68.1	13.6	71.9	18.4	71.5	14.4	68.4	11.2	60.0	11.0	68.4	11.2	60.0	11.0	11.0	11.0
1990	77.6	21.3	77.5	18.4	81.4	23.1	81.3	19.8	65.8	11.9	66.0	10.0	65.8	11.9	66.0	10.0	10.0	10.0
1995	81.7	23.0	81.6	20.2	85.9	25.4	85.8	22.1	73.4	13.6	74.0	12.0	73.4	13.6	74.0	12.0	12.0	12.0
2000	84.1	25.6	84.0	23.6	88.4	28.1	88.4	25.1	79.0	16.4	78.7	16.8	79.0	16.4	78.7	16.8	16.8	16.8
2001	84.3	26.1	84.2	24.3	88.7	28.6	88.8	26.5	80.6	15.9	78.6	16.3	80.6	15.9	78.6	16.3	16.3	16.3
2002	84.1	26.7	84.4	25.1	88.7	29.6	88.9	27.3	79.0	16.5	79.4	17.7	79.0	16.5	79.4	17.7	17.7	17.7
2003	84.0	29.0	85.0	26.0	89.9	29.8	90.0	27.4	79.3	17.1	80.3	17.9	79.3	17.1	80.3	17.9	17.9	17.9
Increase	42.9	21.3	42.5	20.2	46.7	21.2	45.3	21.4	39.7	13.6	38.6	14.3	39.7	13.6	38.6	14.3	14.3	14.3
% of																		
Increase	104	277	100	348	108	247	101	357	100	389	93	397	100	389	93	397	397	397

From "Digest of Education Statistics, 2004," National Center for Education Statistics, U. S. Department of Education, Washington, DC.

Conceptual Framework

After the release of A Nation at Risk (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983), the term "at risk" was indiscriminately used to characterize youth who have a high probability of failure in mainstream society. Characteristics such as limited-English proficiency, ethnic and racial group status, socioeconomic status, teenage pregnancy, drug abuse and other negative factors were cited as predictive measures of students' academic outcomes and successes (Edelman, 1993; Richardson & Colfer, 1990; Self, 1985).

Yet, questions of motivation remained at the heart of contemporary researchers who were concerned about the status of students' academic achievement. Far too many students, particularly minority students, performed poorly in schools, thus short-circuiting future options (Asamen & Berry, 1989; Graham, 1994). Reasons cited in the literature for the apparent lack of students' academic performance include low expectation, hopelessness, family structure, racial and ethnic identification, lack of interest, socioeconomic status, teacher-student interactions, extra-curricular participation, school structure, school size, and the fact that some students gave up in face of potential failure (Asamen & Berry, 1989; Banks, 1986; Brophy, 1974; Clark, 1983; Comer, 1984, 1988; Good, 1985; Kurdek & Sinclair, 1988; Holland & Andre, 1987; Rotherman, 1987; Solomon, Hirsch, Scheinfeld, & Jackson, 1972). However, despite the adversarial circumstances surrounding "at-risk" youth, some African-American students were achieving academically (Braddock, Royster, Winfield, & Hawkins, 1991; Geary, 1988; Graham, 1994; Hrabowski, 1991; Hrabowski & Maton, 1995). These students are characterized as "defying the odds." As educators, policymakers and researchers studied academic achievement among at-risk students, the paradigm shifted from merely identifying "at-risk" behaviors affecting academic achievement to investigating variables associated with academically achieving

students, especially African-American males. Researchers' attention shifted to the study of multidimensional cognitive and non-cognitive variables impacting upon "at-risk" academically achieving students. This shift revealed that "at-risk" academically achieving students had goals, anticipated success, and took measures to prepare themselves for academic successes (Braddock et al., 1991; Braddock, 2000; Geary, 1988; Graham, 1994).

Researchers and educators began to investigate variables that might be associated with improved academic achievement of African-Americans (Graham & Folkes, 1990; Hrabowski, 1991; Hrabowski & Maton 1995; McMurry, 1993). The literature is rich in citing the demise of African-American males and their plight in the United States in terms of educational achievement, socioeconomic status and crime (Hernstein & Murry, 1996; Kunjufu, 1989; Rowan, 1996). For example, Rowan (1996) wrote that African-American males made up 6% of the United States population, but represented 59% of the incarcerated and 35% of special education student population. According to Clark (1983), these discrepancies engendered racial rage, dissatisfaction for educators, and economic and social discord for African-Americans.

Graham (1994) highlighted the rage and discord recorded in Clark's (1983) work. Graham cited studies of prior predictions that African-Americans had a negative self-concept about their academic abilities. In her study of African-Americans who were considered unmotivated to achieve and who lacked personality traits associated with academic success, Graham offered the following:

As measured by research on need for achievement, there is no strong evidence that African-Americans lack personality traits associated with motivation. Both expectancy for future success and self-concept of

ability among African-Americans remain relatively high even when achievement outcomes indicate otherwise. (p. 103)

The United States Census Bureau (1996) reported that nearly 75% of the two million African-Americans who were 25 and older were high school graduates. Additionally, the same report indicated that between 1995 and 1996, their median income was \$25,970 (United States Census Bureau, 1996). In 1995, people without a high school diploma earned \$25,000 less than college graduates (United States Census Bureau, 1996). According to Rowan (1996), earnings appeared to be dependent on the level of education. Therefore, there appears to be a strong link between educational attainment and economic status.

Given the relationship between educational attainment and economic status, researchers continued to investigate academic achievement of African-American males (Fleming, 1984; Gibbs, 1988; Slavin, Karweit & Madden, 1989; Treisman, 1985). Those scholars reported that African-American males were achieving academically. Other scholars cited evidence that African-American males are capable of achieving academically in school; however, in some instances they are not capitalizing on their academic strengths, nor are they advancing academically (Nettles, 1991; Rowan, 1996). For example, some African-American students choose not to demonstrate academic competence for fear of being labeled as "acting white" (Fordham & Ogbu, 1986).

To examine academic achievement further, educators and researchers designed studies to discover variables associated with academically achieving African-American males (Astin, 1977; Sedlack & Brooks, 1976). These researchers found that cognitive variables such as Scholastic Aptitude Test scores and high school grades were related to academic achievement. They also inferred that non-cognitive variables such as self-esteem, self-efficacy, educational aspirations, educational background,

family background, family and peer support, resilience, and persistence (particularly in extra-curricular activities) are associated with academic performance of African-Americans (Astin, 1982; Braddock et al., 1991; Gibbs, 1988; Hrabowski & Maton, 1995; Rosenberg & Simmons, 1971; and Winfield, 1991). Researchers provided accounts of African-American males achieving academically at college despite their being classified as "at risk" of school failure (Carr, 1992; Hrabowski, 1991; Hrabowski & Maton, 1995; Padilla, Trevino & Gonzales, 1997). However, there was an absence of studies that identified variables associated with academic achievement among African-American males within the public school setting at the high school level.

Boykin (1991) contended that the academic performance of African-American youths "...cannot be understood in terms of the scholarly traditions of our field alone... [but that] psychology may offer important insights" (p. 57). Winfield (1991) suggested the need for critical interdisciplinary research. She proposed that in order to move beyond simply identifying and categorizing youth as "at risk," the focus must shift to understanding the notion of resilience. Viewed in this manner, the critical issue in education is not who is at risk or how many factors one has to have to be considered at risk. Rather, the critical issue centered on identifying the protective processes and mechanisms that foster resilience.

Rutter (1987) stated that "Resilience is concerned with individual variations in response to risk ... [which] cannot be seen as a fixed attribute of the individual" (p. 317). Rather, resilience is altered as the circumstances change. In other words, resilience could be defined as an individual's ability to "bounce back" in light of personal adversity.

Persistence is one of the most frequently mentioned attributes of academically successful minority university students. Two interpretations were found in the

literature. In some studies, persistence meant staying in college versus dropping out or being dismissed because of academic failure or other administrative reasons (Martin, 1985; Mock & Young, 1969; Mutter, 1992). In other studies, the term persistence was used to represent one of the personal attributes of academically oriented students. In this sense, persistence referred to the propensity of academically inclined students to persist in an academic task or problem until it was fully completed or solved (Attinasis, 1992; Graham, 1988; Saenger-Ceba, 1972; Valencia, 1994). In other words, persistence could be defined as an individual's effort to exert personal direction toward a goal of which academic achievement is the key. Therefore, academic resilience and academic persistence are considered to operate in concert with each other.

It is especially important to validate academic achievement of all children, to minimize the educational achievement gap among students and to reverse the trend of educational demise of African-American males. The intent of this study was to further investigate variables associated with academic achievement among academically achieving African-American males enrolled in a mid-Atlantic public school system at the high school level.

Significance of the Study

Even if one doubts that a crisis exists or that African-American males' futures are bleak, few systematic studies have been offered to address the problems that at least one-third of young African-American males experience (Garibaldi, 1992), especially at the high school level. Examinations of academic achievement of African-American male students in public schools require an extensive investigation into factors inhibiting and promoting academic progress. Since the work of Atkinson,

Lowell and Clark (1953), Maslow (1954), and Atkinson (1964), educators and researchers have been intensely interested in the systematic study of achievement.

Few studies, however, looked beyond family and socioeconomic demographics to examine how student-held variables influence their academic achievement. Furthermore, few studies examined factors and variables associated with academically successful African-American males at the high school level. Such studies are important if educators, policymakers and researchers are to understand barriers that affect matriculation of African-American males. Moreover, few systematic solutions have been offered to address realistically the problem that at least one-third of young African-American males experience (Garibaldi, 1992). Further research is needed to determine, in more definitive terms, variables contributing to the academic success of African-American males at the high school level.

Being detached from academic pursuits and dropping out of school, a developmental occurrence, is a problem both for the individual and for society in general. Dropouts have high unemployment rates and lower earnings than do high school graduates (Peng, 1983; Rowan, 1996). Educational attainment, therefore, for those who are poor or members of minorities is particularly important for later chances in life. For instance, for African-American males with the necessary educational prerequisites, there is a good chance of occupational mobility (Rowan, 1996; Monk, 2000). Conversely, for African-American males without the necessary educational prerequisites, there is a good chance of unemployment, low wages, imprisonment, poor health and continuous poverty (Ascher, 1991; Gill, 1992; Rowan, 1996; Wilson & Banks, 1994). A high school diploma, then, becomes a critical requirement for African-American males.

While a high school diploma is the standard for all children, there are African-American males who perform academically beyond the basic standard required to

receive a high school diploma. These African-American males appear to have aspirations and plans related to educational attainment (Wilson-Sadberry, Winfield & Royster, 1991). Geary (1988) found that those African-American students who were academically successful in high school had positive attitudes and expended a great deal of effort toward academic pursuits. Additionally, Sedlack and Brook (1976), Astin (1977) and Nettles (1991) found that cognitive and non-cognitive variables were positively associated with academic achievement among African-Americans.

The results of this study could be used to further enlighten educators', policymakers' and researchers' awareness of the variables associated with academically achieving African-American males, thereby reversing the trend of academic failure among so many African-American males. It is imperative that educators, policymakers and researchers look beyond the plight of African-American males to explore questions of why some African-American males are academically achieving while sharing many of the same demographics associated with the "at-risk" population.

In summary, this study is intended for educators, policymakers and researchers considering cognitive and non-cognitive variables associated with academic achievement. Additionally, the results of this investigation are intended for use by administrators, counselors, and teachers interested in developing programs for improving academic achievement for high school African-American males. The results of this study have implications for curricular changes and counseling services for students and for teacher preparation programs. Additionally, educators and researchers might manipulate variables to improve the academic performance of struggling learners.

Definitions of Terms

At Risk: Describes youths who are chemically dependent, a runaway, suicidal, pregnant, economically disadvantaged, a minority, or a school dropout.

Motivation: Internal state or condition that activates behavior and gives it direction; desire or want that energizes and directs goal-oriented behavior; influence of needs and desires on the intensity and direction of behavior (Kleinginna & Kleinginna, 1981).

Persistence: Continuous effort when confronted with a difficult or insolvable task (Feather, 1962).

Resilience: An individual's variations in their ability to "bounce back" in response to personal adversity (Rutter, 1987).

Self-efficacy: Refers to personal judgments of how well one could perform actions in specific situations that may contain ambiguous, unpredictable, and stressful features (Bandura, 1971).

Organization of the Study

The information presented in this study is organized into five chapters. Chapter One, an introduction to the research, includes the following sections: (a) a statement of the research problem, (b) the significance of the study, (c) the definition of relevant terms, (d) limitations of the study and (e) the organization of the study.

Chapter Two contains a review of the research literature on at-risk, motivation, persistence and resilience. This chapter will discuss the empirical and theoretical foundations of the research that led to this study.

Chapter Three provides an overview of the methodology and procedures used to undertake this study of determining the attributes found among academically achieving African-American males in high school. A description of the procedures used to examine motivation, persistence, resilience and academic achievement, a

description of the sample population, and methods for distributing the survey instrument are included. The section on data analysis provides a description of how the data from the Achievement Motivation Profile (AMP) were analyzed.

The findings from the survey instrument are presented and analyzed in Chapter Four. Chapter Five presents a summary of the research findings and the conclusions. Recommendations for further study are also included in this chapter.

Limitations of the Study

The Achievement Motivation Profile incorporates contemporary language, topical test items, and a wide range of self-descriptive statements that enable students to describe themselves. The AMP reflects students' perceived strengths and liabilities with respect to motivation and achievement. This self-report inventory measures specific factors that can enhance or diminish achievement. The AMP is composed of 140 brief, self-describing statements that produce scale scores in four areas: Motivation for Achievement, Inner Resources, Interpersonal Skills and Work Habits.

The Achievement Motivation Profile has been shown to be reliable across time, to have internally consistent scales, and to reflect stable personality and interpersonal attributes. It is valid both when compared to other acceptable psychological instruments and when distinguishing among various groups. Specific scales on the AMP correlate strongly with academic performance, but not with intelligence. It distinguishes among underachiever, achiever, and over-achieving groups, and among differentially diagnosed types of underachievers. These results demonstrate that the AMP is a valid measure of the motivation, personality, and interpersonal and work habits fundamental to student achievement. Therefore, it appears that there are few limitations to the survey instrument itself.

However, there are four specific limitations for this study. The first limitation centers on the "lie factor" concept. The second limitation is that variation in directions of instrument could lead students to differ in the interpretation of the directions and therefore differ in their responses. The third limitation is that self-inventories measure one's perceptions of self and perceptions are not necessarily true. Although there are three limitations cited, it is quite possible that during the administration of the survey other limitations may unfold. A fourth limitation may be that the students, all from one county in a mid-Atlantic state, are not a representative sample of a larger population.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

The academic performance of minority students remains a persistent, troubling, and seemingly intractable national problem (Boykin, 1991). Past evidence documenting the failure of African-Americans to achieve academically at the same level as their White counterparts was overwhelming in its quality and consistency (Ashbury, 1978; Coleman, Campbell, Hobson, McPartland, Mood, Weinfeld, & York, 1966; Hare, 1985; Hare, 1986; Hare, 1987; Ogbu, 1977; Smith, 1979). The questions concerning the factors that influence the failure of African-Americans to achieve academically generated a considerable amount of research and often prompted passionate debates. Despite the attention, opinions remained divided about how to account for academic difficulties among African-Americans and how to best alleviate the differences in academic achievement among African-Americans and their White counterparts.

The debate on the academic achievement of minority children, for the most part, relied on factors and attributes associated with the "at risk" population. Family structure, socioeconomic status, teacher-student interactions, extra-curricular participation, school structure and school size were cited as possible factors and attributes affecting the academic successes and failures of minority students (Banks, 1976; Boyer, 1988; Brophy, 1974; Clark, 1983; Comer, 1984, 1988; Good, 1985; Holland & Andre, 1987; Kurdek & Sinclair, 1998; Rotherman, 1987; Solomon,

Hirsch, Scheinfeld & Jackson, 1972). These factors and attributes, seemingly, contributed to an awareness of the diversity of the issue associated with the academic achievement of minority students.

The education of African-American children, especially African-American males, offered unique considerations. African-American males appeared to be losing in the battle to grow and survive in the United States. Statistics indicated that African-American males were suffering acute reactions to living in a predominantly Eurocentric culture and society (Akbar, 1982; Gill, 1992; Hare, 1985; Kunjufu, 1985; Madhubuti, 1980). When compared with other gender and racial groups, African-American males showed greater disparities in education, poverty levels, family disintegration, criminal status, health and health rates (Ascher, 1991; Gill, 1992; Wilson & Banks, 1994).

According to Ascher (1985), many educators believed that organizations and practices contributed to the critical and unique problems suffered by African-American males. Organizational practices, seemingly, were driven by two "at risk" concepts. The descriptive and predictive concepts implied the need for a series of educational practices and policies based on remediation in order to make non-White racial and ethnic groups equal to their middle-class counterparts. One outcome of this focus was a lack of systematic, accumulated understanding of the diverse skills and talents found within these groups of students (Slaughter, 1988; Spencer, Brookins & Allen, 1985). Another outcome of this focus was that African-Americans in public schools remained largely isolated and received an inferior education (Gill, 1991). As a result, African-Americans, particularly African-American males, were often considered "at risk" of school failure.

More recent researchers suggest that past research centered on the concept of at-risk was based on a deficit model. The deficit model, commonly known as the

descriptive approach for defining at-risk students, proposed that students were to blame for their environmental circumstances (Goodlad & Keating, 1990; Natriello, McDill, & Pallas, 1990). Instead of focusing on the deficits, these researchers focused on factors enabling at-risk students to "beat the odds" of academic failure. In contrast to the deficit approach, the strengths-based approach captures a wide range of competencies and capacities of the individual.

Therefore, the first part of the literature review on "at risk" describes past research associated with "at-risk" students and the second part of the literature review on "at-risk" students reflects the changing views associated with "at risk" students.

The "At-Risk" Population

Those who lack the basic skills, career skills, and social skills to be successful in the workplace will likely encounter unemployment, welfare, and incarceration in this nation's jails and prisons. (Martin, 1987, p. 7)

Following the release of A Nation at Risk (Education Commission of the States, 1983), the term "at risk" catapulted into our language and laid claim to a permanent place in the lexicon of education -- despite the fact that it was never clearly defined. Most commonly, however, it seemed to be applied to students who were in danger of failing in the regular school program.

A Nation at Risk (1983) warned the American people that "a rising tide of mediocrity" was sweeping through schools. The nation was considered to be "at risk" because of the perceived academic failures of students. In the succeeding years, we came to view the "at risk" issue in broader terms.

In Fateful Choices: Healthy Youth for the 21st Century (Hechinger, 1992), the Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development described the magnitude and dimension

of the problem characterizing at-risk adolescents in the mid-1990s. According to those findings, approximately 7 million of the 28 million young people enrolled in middle and junior high schools were considered at high risk of failing in school and participating in such harmful behaviors as alcohol and drug abuse and premature and unprotected sexual activities. Additionally, many young people were likely to be involved in violent behaviors, either as victims or perpetrators. Many also had little access to health service. Another 7 million young people might be considered moderately at risk. This group of young people constituted a subgroup with serious academic, social and personal problems.

Marian Wright Edelman (1993), the president of the Children's Defense Fund, presented figures that revealed the alarming problems of at-risk youth:

Every 16 seconds of every school day, as we talk about a competitive workforce in the future, one of our children drops out of school. Every 26 seconds of every day, an American child runs away from home. These are not just poor or black children -- these are our children. This is not something affecting just a few families -- these are national problems. Every 47 seconds, a youngster is abused. Every 67 seconds, a teenager has a baby. We produce the equivalent of the city of Seattle each year with children having children. Every seven minutes, a child is arrested for drug offense. Every 30 minutes, one of our children is charged with drunken driving. Every 53 minutes, in the richest land on Earth, an American child dies because of poverty. It is disgraceful that children are the poorest Americans and that, in the last year alone, 80,000 youngsters fell into poverty and that there has been a 26% increase since 1979 in poverty among children. (p. 25)

In the late 1980s and the early 1990s, an increased public interest in the problem of at-risk adolescents and children became apparent. More articles emerged on at-risk conditions, implementation of numerous programs, and a recognition that professional educators had a responsibility to address the needs of at-risk children and adolescents.

The term "at risk" was used in many different ways for many different purposes. To be a youth at risk might have meant a young person who was chemically dependent, a runaway, suicidal, pregnant, economically disadvantaged, a minority, or a school dropout. The definition of at risk was not only important to educators but also to economists, social scientists, and the legal system. Research revealed that the consequences of at-riskness affected more than just the educational system. The judicial, economic and social systems were equally affected resulting in problems that carried over from one system to the others. According to the Business Advisory Commission of the Education Commission of the States, the concept of "at-riskness" was extended to one of not making successful transition to productive adult lives (Gabriel & Anderson, 1987).

Historically, children from poverty have been disproportionately placed at risk of academic failure (Natriello, McDill, & Pallas, 1990). Along with poverty, researchers also have associated an individual's status as a racial or cultural minority with academic risk (Gordon & Yowell, 1994; Natriello, McDill & Pallas, 1990). Beyond such individual factors, schools that serve children of poverty and of color also may introduce risk factors by failing to provide a supportive school climate, by institutionalizing low academic expectations or by delivering inadequate educational resources. Finally, academic risk may be associated with the potential discontinuity or "lack of fit" between the behavior patterns and values socialized in the context of low-income and minority families and communities and those expected in the mainstream

classroom and school context (Boykin, 1986; Delpit, 1995; Gordon & Yowell, 1994; Taylor, 1991). For instance, Fordham and Ogbu (1986) argued that because African-Americans have had limited opportunities in America, they developed an "oppositional" culture that equated doing well in school with "acting White" or "selling out." Therefore, individual characteristics, school characteristics, and the interactions between individuals and school characteristics all may contribute to a student's risk of academic failure. To understand how the term "at risk" found a lexicon in education, it is important to recognize characteristics associated with at-risk students.

The purpose of this literature review is to revisit the research on "at risk," motivation, persistence and resilience as each relates to educational attainment of students with a specific focus on African-American males.

Characteristics of "At Risk" Students

The at-risk student was defined as one whose potential was not nurtured by their educational experiences (Research for Better Schools, 1991). Two concepts were used to define at-risk students.

The predictive concept considered background and social and emotional characteristics to identify students who were at risk of becoming at risk. This approach attempted to identify problems before they occurred. The second concept used to define at-risk students identified at-risk students on the basis of problematic behaviors exhibited in school. This approach attempted to wait until school-related problems occurred and then identify students exhibiting such behaviors as at risk (Richardson & Colfer, 1990).

The predictive and problematic concepts emerged as early as the 1970s. Self (1985) conducted a review of the literature on high school retention. The purpose of

the study was to present what current research concluded about potential secondary school dropouts and to offer strategies for establishing effective dropout prevention programs. Three criteria for understanding and working with potential dropouts were identified. The first criterion was to identify characteristics of the potential dropout. The second criterion was to identify reasons for dropping out of school. The third criterion was to identify dropout prevention programs.

Self (1985) found 19 characteristics of potential dropouts from nine different researchers. Self (1985) also found greater commonalities in identifying characteristics of potential dropouts among seven researchers (Beacham, 1980; Durken, 1981; Hewitt & Johnson, 1979; Martin, 1981; Massey & Crosby, 1982; Rumberger, 1981; Schreiber, 1979). The characteristics of potential dropouts were: poor academics, low parental education, dislike of school, dislike of teachers, grade retention, discipline problems, less participation in extra-curricular activities, low parental education, low socioeconomic status, poor reading abilities, poor self-concept, parental dropouts, came from broken homes, typically dropped out at age 15 and encouraged to drop out by their parents (Beacham, 1980; Durken, 1981; Hewitt & Johnson, 1979; Martin, 1981; Massey & Crosby, 1982; Rumberger, 1981; Schreiber, 1979).

Self (1985) concluded from the review of literature that predictive indicators of at-risk behaviors may be low socioeconomic status, low level of educational attainment of either parent, a single-parent household, minority status, or an individual predisposition such as being handicapped. Self (1985) further concluded problematic indicators of at-risk behaviors may be low grades, grade retention, truancy, non-participation in extracurricular activities, poor academics and discipline problems.

While Self's (1985) review of the literature was from 1979-1983, his conclusions, seemingly, at least in part, were supported by more recent studies

identifying characteristics of at-risk students. For instance, Hahn (1987) attempted to synthesize a broad array of research findings and program practices in dropout service and prevention. Hahn (1987) reported that a variety of studies conducted by social scientists identified ten conditions as major risk factors among high school students indicating possible school failure. These conditions were: behind in grade level and older than classmates, poor academic performance, dislike of school, detention and suspension, pregnancy, welfare recipients and members of single-parent households, attractiveness of work, attraction of military service, language difficulties and undiagnosed learning disabilities (Dropout in America: Enough Is Known for Action, Hahn, 1987).

Family at risk was further explored in the ERS Bulletin of May 1991 that addressed the concept of at-risk families contributing to the at-risk nesses of students (Researching At-Risk Families, 1991). The bulletin explained that barriers and misunderstandings might exist between the parents of at-risk students and the school. Many of the parents experienced feelings of inadequacy and poor self-worth and had had bad experiences as students. The Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) further explored characteristics of at-risk behaviors in 1987. The CCSSO was a nationwide non-profit organization of 56 public officials who headed departments of public education in every state, the District of Columbia, and five extra state jurisdictions. CCSSO sought consensus on major education issues and expressed collective views to civic and professional organizations, to federal agencies, to Congress, and to the public.

In order to develop an informational base for analysis and preparations of recommendations to the Chief State School Officers (1987), the Study Commission developed two surveys with four purposes. One purpose of the survey was to elicit information about how the needs of at-risk students were being defined and met

through changes in legislation, regulations or funding. The second purpose was to elicit information about the involvement of state departments of education and school districts in defining and meeting the needs of "at-risk" students. The third purpose was to elicit information about the factors that were seen as obstacles to effectively serving at-risk students. The fourth purpose was to elicit information about the design and operation of successful at-risk programs and practices. The first survey, the State Education Agency (SEA) Questionnaire (1978), collected data from the state-level perspective. The second survey, the At-Risk Student Program Description (Kleese & D'Onofrio, 1994), was sent to directors of programs that were identified by the states and territories as successful in serving the needs of at-risk youth. Among CCSSO's findings, they concluded that thirty-nine state education agencies (SEA) reported the existence of a working definition of at-risk students in their states. The definitions used by the SEAs fell into one or more of the following four categories. The first category was students with low achievement levels. The second category was students with behavioral problems. The third category was students at risk of dropping out of school. And lastly, the fourth category was students exhibiting one or more at-risk indicators such as low academic performance, poor attendance, behavioral problems, and personal economic conditions.

Therefore, there appeared to be agreement, at least in part, between CCSSO's characteristics of "at-risk students" and Self's (1985) conclusions that indicators of at-risk behaviors might be low socioeconomic status, poor academics and discipline problems. In other words, at-risk student behaviors were conceptualized as predictive and problematic.

After the release of the CCSSO's report, McCann and Austin (1988) prepared a paper, "At-Risk Youth: Definitions, Dimensions and Relationships," for Research for Better Schools. The first purpose was to highlight the ways in which the problem was

being defined in Maryland and Pennsylvania. The second purpose was to highlight the data sets that were being used to suggest the magnitude of the problem in Maryland and Pennsylvania. The third purpose was to highlight the studies that were being used to suggest the interrelationships of various aspects of the problem.

After examining characteristics associated with at-risk populations, Maryland, Pennsylvania and Research for Better Schools classified the problem of at risk into three different domains. First, at-risk populations referred to students, who and for whatever reason, were at risk of not achieving the goals of education. Therefore, at-risk students were not meeting local and state standards for high school graduation nor were at-risk students acquiring the knowledge, skills and disposition to become productive members of the American society. Second, at-risk populations referred to students, who and for whatever reason, exhibited behaviors that educators regarded as interfering with the educational process. Therefore, at-risk students demonstrated behaviors that may prevent them from meeting the requirements for high school graduation. Student behaviors included truancy, suspensions, expulsion, drug and alcohol usage, pregnancy, and perceived non-engagement in classroom and school activities. Third, at-risk populations referred to students whose family and community suggested "bleakness" for at-risk students.

However, an analysis of demographic trends suggested other background characteristics that may also label students as "at risk." For example, Hodgkinson (1985) suggested that educators in the coming decade would face children with seven circumstances. These circumstances might be premature births, born to a teenage mother, born to unmarried parents, come from single-parent households, come from "blended" families, nonparticipation in Head Start or preschool programs, and are "latch-key" children.

Data sets used by Maryland, Pennsylvania and Research for Better Schools were organized into categories by definition of characteristics of "at-risk students". Each characteristic had at least three different supporting sources. For instance, to define "at risk" as not graduating from high school, five different sources were used. These sources were: (1) The Institute of Educational Leadership, Inc. (1986); (2) U. S. Census Bureau (1986); (3) Ekstrom, Goertz, Pollack and Rock (1986); (4) Maryland State Department of Education, (1987); and (5) Lavery (1985). To explore alternative ways of defining "at risk," results were reported from National Assessment of Educational Progress (1984); High School and Beyond (Carroll, 1986); Data Base (1985); Tracey, Wolfgang and Figlio (1985); Gottfredson, Gottfredson and Cook (1983); and Chilman (1980).

The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) (1984) correlated young adults' performance on three sets of literacy tasks, which were correlated with levels of education and racial/ethnic background. Analyses showed that the higher a young adult's level of education, the more difficult the literary tasks the young adult could perform. Analysis also showed a significant performance difference among racial/ethnic groups. More White young adults were able to complete the task satisfactorily than Hispanic young adults, and more Hispanic young adults were able to complete the tasks satisfactorily than African-American young adults.

An analysis of data from the High School and Beyond Study (1986) compared characteristics of 1980 sophomores who stayed in high school to those sophomores who dropped out of school. Ekstrom et al. (1986) found six differences among the sophomores. They found that dropouts were disproportionately from low socioeconomic families, tended to come from homes with weaker educational support systems, reported less interest in school, worked more hours per week and found working more enjoyable than school. Additionally, they reported that dropouts

attended class regularly but felt less popular and less likely to participate in extracurricular activities. Furthermore, dropouts had lower grades, test scores, did less homework and had more disciplinary problems than those sophomores who did not drop out of school.

McCann and Austin (1988) concluded that there appeared to be a relationship among students at risk in three primary areas. The first relationship was between students at risk and student family characteristics such as poverty, low English proficiency, low educational aspirations and expectations. The second relationship was between students at risk and student behaviors such as attending school, not becoming engaged in school-related activities, drug and alcohol usage, and committing disruptive and delinquent acts. The third relationship was between students at risk and students not graduating from high school with the knowledge and skills needed to become productive members of the American society (Martin, 1981).

Researchers were consistent in their contention that an at-risk student population existed. Although predictive and problematic behaviors appeared to be indicators of at risk, other researchers advised caution in labeling students at-risk. A study conducted by the U.S. Office of Research and Improvement (1990) challenged two commonly supported conclusions: (1) that the lower the socioeconomic status the more likely the individual will be classified at risk; (2) that the lower the educational attainment of either parent, the more likely that the child will be classified at risk. The study found that one condition contributing to at-risk status was the lack of supervision after school. However, the chances of no one being home when a child returns from school increases as the family income does. In addition to this finding, the study indicated that the highest percentage of unsupervised children came from those groups of parents with higher levels of education. In conclusion, higher socioeconomic status and higher educational attainment levels of parents instead of

lower educational attainment levels contributed to the at-risk status of those children studied.

Richardson and Colfer (1990) concurred with an Office of Educational Research and Improvement study (1990) in urging caution in identifying students as at risk on the basis of easily measured traits, behaviors, or background conditions such that everyone would agree on the identify of at-risk students. They reasoned that the designation of at-riskness relied very much on the nature of the student body within a particular school or classroom, and the goals, aspirations and instructional programs and practices of the teachers. Richardson and Colfer (1990) concluded that the concept of "at-riskness" was viewed as a combination of personal and background characteristics of a child and the social and academic context of the school. The particular academic and social organization of a school and classroom, the norms of its teachers, the academic expectations held for its students, and the academic tasks encountered by the students may affect the students' at-risk status. They reasoned that students can be at risk at one time and not at another, and in one classroom but not in another classroom.

More recently, McMillan and Reed (1993) reported similar characteristics of at-risk students. Characteristics of at-risk students were grouped into three primary domains: social/family background, personal problems, and school factors.

Summary of "At-Risk" Students

Historically, "at-risk" students were primarily those whose appearance, language, culture, values, communities and family structure did not match those of the dominant White culture. These students -- primarily minorities, the poor, and immigrants -- were considered culturally or educationally disadvantaged or deprived. As it became obvious that large numbers of these students were not achieving at

minimally acceptable levels, ". . . it seemed natural and certainly easy to define the problem as arising from deficiencies in the students themselves" (Goodlad & Keating, 1990, p. 26).

More recently, the tendency to blame the lack of academic achievement on characteristics of the students, their communities, or their families has diminished, or is at least less overt. Moreover, the terminology has changed and is generally less pejorative, even though, some continue to use the term "educationally disadvantaged" (Natriello, McDill, & Pallas, 1990).

Students who have certain kinds of conditions such as living with one parent, being a member of a minority group, have limited English proficiency, and so on, are defined as at risk because, statistically, students in these categories are more likely to be among the lowest achievement groups. This descriptive approach, most commonly used for defining the at-risk student population, is based on a deficit model for students, their families and communities (Natriello et al., 1990). More often, reliance on this approach leads even compassionate and well-meaning educators and policymakers to devise programs to identify the various ways in which children need to be changed in order to fit into existing school structures and programs (Goodlad & Keating, 1990). Even more problematic, this early categorizing of students often has the effect of simply lowering teachers' expectations of what students have the potential to achieve. The phrase "what can you expect from these types of students" continues to be heard throughout too many schools and classrooms. Lastly, use of such categorical indicators often places students in the position of being blamed for poor school performance on the basis of characteristics over which they have no control (Richardson & Colfer, 1990).

In direct contrast to the deficit approach, the strength-based alternative focuses on the positive potential of individuals, populations and communities. Strengths, not

weaknesses, command primary attention and are broadly defined to capture the full range of competencies and capacities of individual groups, settings, and communities. Strengths include varied, cognitive, affective and psychological, moral and behavioral capacities, such as self-efficacy, positive coping, practical knowledge, special talents and persistence, to name a few. The strength-based model encompasses instrumental, relational, structural and cultural capacities. Among these are clear goals, meaningful roles, adaptive decision-making processes, culturally congruent norms, and sense of community.

For instance, in whole-school reform all students in inner-city communities are viewed as being capable of success and expected to achieve as opposed to a select few (Comer, 1988; Levin, 1996). In Levin's (1996) "accelerated schools," students are likely to benefit from the curricular approaches traditionally held for "gifted and talented" programs. In the case of strength-based social work practices, seriously mentally ill individuals are viewed as having the potential of developing meaningful relationships and leading meaning-rich lives (Saleebey, 1998). In the cultural strength perspective, traditional features of diverse cultural subgroups are viewed as assets for the group and the larger society, rather than a subgroup handicap or societal problem (Downey, 1999; Trickett, Walts & Birman, 1994). A positive view of the strengths of an individual, population or community does not ignore problems, difficulties or the critical need to alleviate or prevent the harm caused by difficulties (Comer, 1988; Levin, 1996; Weissberg & Elias, 1993). The key assumption of a positive view is that the person is not defined by their difficulties, and the solution to these difficulties begins with the marshaling of their strengths. Therefore, we need to change our approach from one that emphasizes risks, deficits, and psychopathology to one that capitalizes on protection, strengths, and assets. We have become experts at predicting who will fail and what kinds of programs will compensate for the deficits. To design

effective interventions, we must understand how some students persist and succeed in school and in later life despite the overwhelming odds against them.

In what ways do students learn to cope? The importance of acquiring key competencies and capacities is an integral part in the development of healthy children and youths. While this researcher recognizes that factors associated with school, family and communities influence academic achievement among students, generally students have no control over those factors. What students do have control over is how they achieve. So the question becomes, what personal attributes do students employ that lead to academic achievement?

In summary, earlier research documenting characteristics of at-risk students is quite conclusive. There is abundant analysis and evidence that students at risk were often poor, minority, non-English speaking, came from families of low socioeconomic and educational status. Students at risk frequently lacked community and family support. Evidence clearly showed that schools' failure to serve students at risk resulted from these factors: low expectations for student performance, inadequate resources, and the inadequacy of school programs.

Increasingly, researchers have begun to look at the flip side of at risk, and instead have focused on the factors that enable at-risk students to "beat the odds" against achieving academic success. Although it is appropriate to recognize the desperate social and economic conditions that affect young people, it is critical to study and understand how some youth succeed despite the overwhelming odds against them. Research from the past two decades typically emphasized the individual vulnerabilities, deficits pathology, deviance, or risk factors that were associated with negative outcomes for children and families.

The term "at risk" has been over-used in education, often being applied to urban youth as a descriptor even though the term actually applies to the conditions of

their lives -- specifically, "risk factors" such as poverty and economic status. In labeling youth "at risk," we often blame the students for their own educational failure. As noted by Berry (1989), "The old labels of the past that have inferred cognitive, motivational, self-esteem, and learning deficits of Black children, youth and college-age young adults should be looked at with a jaundiced eye" (p. 288). In contrast, a strengths-based approach seeks to illuminate and understand the individual and environmental characteristics and protective processes that create and support positive developmental outcomes.

A strengths-based approach is to recognize that there are substantial variations in the adjustment of individuals, families and communities experiencing adverse circumstances. Knowledge about the development of strengths in individuals, families and communities necessary to promote, maintain, or enhance adaptive functioning is a central goal of the strengths-based research. Despite the statistical projections of African-American males' status, there are numerous accounts of African-American males achieving scholastically (Carr, 1992; Hrabowski, Maton & Greif, 1998; Padilla, Trevino & Gonzales, 1977). Therefore, the overarching question is, What are the personally held attributes accounting for academic success of academically successful African-American males? Questions accounting for the academic achievement of African-American males continue to surface (Graham, 1994; Rosenberg & Simmons, 1971). What motivates academically successful African-American males to achieve academically?

Motivation of African-American Males

Most of the chronic school failures of African-American males are understood to reflect problems in motivation. Far too many minority children perform poorly in school because they have low expectations, feel hopeless, lack interest, or give up in

the face of potential failure, not because they lack basic intellectual capacities (Berry & Asamen, 1989). Educators not only influence students' achievement and cognitive development, but their self-efficacy and attitudes as well (Irvin, 1990). Many children feel that their teachers do not positively receive them and, as a result, they do not like school. Some students feel isolated, discouraged and eventually fail academically (Irvin, 1990). However, not all children, including African-American males, share these attributes.

Many African-American males remain invested in academic pursuits and are academically successful (Braddock et al., 1991; Geary, 1988; Graham, 1994; Hrabowski & Maton, 1995). Many African-American males remain committed to conventional educational goals despite the occasional, but sometimes major, obstacles they encounter. These students seemingly make a personal investment and commitment to a predetermined goal of which educational attainment is the key.

For instance, Geary (1988) conducted an ethnographic study to investigate factors in the experiences of African-American inner-city 10th and 11th graders that enabled them to succeed academically in spite of the often debilitating factors and circumstances that surrounded them. She reasoned that the dominant theories; cultural deprivation, genetic deficits, and culture conflicts in the education of minorities were "...originally, generated to describe the underlying reasons for the apparent failure of minority students to succeed in educational settings" (p. 3). She argued that while these theories did offer predictions, statistical and correlation data, these theories were inadequate because they failed to offer pertinent insights into the personal educational process of minorities as well as stereotyped minorities based on perceived disparities in minority students' cognitive and linguistic behaviors. Additionally, Geary (1988) contented that these theories failed to take into account that all students "create their own culture" within school and outside of the educational arenas. Therefore, she

concluded, at least and in part, that the school and community cultures have a great deal of influence on the academic achievement of students.

The site for the study was selected by the National Center on Effective Secondary Schools, University of Wisconsin-Madison, as part of a multi-site national study. Lincoln High School was selected because it had received some recognition from the community and press for its innovative programs aimed at "at-risk" African-American youths.

The study was conducted from August 1986 to March 1988. The students in the study were selected during the previous scholastic year (1985-1986) as participants in a newly formed college preparatory program called "Expanded Horizon." Students were primarily selected for participation in the "Expanded Horizon" program on teacher recommendations because standardized test scores were low. Therefore, if an individual teacher saw potential, even if that student had not passed the State Fundamental Skill Test (SFST), or did poor work in class, that individual was asked to be part of the program. It was determined by a faculty committee that students selected for the program place in the 60th percentile or above in mathematics and in the 50th percentile or above in reading on a standardized measure of achievement. However, students could also self-select to be included in the program. Nineteen students, seven African-American males and twelve African-American females, were selected for participation in the study.

Data were collected using interviews, field notes, and documents from administrators, teachers, and students. Field notes included notes, essays and journal entries. Documents included articles and artifacts. The methodology chosen for this study incorporated the specific students', teachers', administrators', and school system personnel's situations, experiences and perceptions about schooling, as well as how these individuals ordinarily functioned and behaved in school settings.

Results of the preliminary analysis of the ethnographic data indicated that teachers and students differed in their understanding of success and how best it is achieved. Geary (1988) indicated that teachers viewed the academic success of student impinging on the students' ability to demonstrate positive attitude and hard work. "... (T)eachers do not view students' lack of success as reflection on them, their beliefs, their knowledge, or their pedagogical techniques" (p. 20). Teachers did not indicate that their expectations of students, preparations of an instructional system, teacher-teacher-student interactional system, professional participation in workshops or meetings, and participation in extra-curricular activities had any significant impact on students' academic success. According to the college preparatory teachers at Lincoln, "...academic success or failure rests solely with the individual student and his/her good attitude and willingness to work hard" (p. 21). Geary (1988) concluded that factors contributing to the success of college preparatory students at Lincoln were an end rather than a means to an end.

She further concluded that students generally agreed with teachers that a good attitude and hard work were needed for academic success. Students, however, reported other factors and attributes contributing to their success. Students reported that believing in themselves, participating in class, participating in extra-curricular activities, coping with a variety of situations and individuals, being friendly and deferring to all (especially teachers), possessing interior motivation and determination and being the best they could be as critical factors and attributes contributing to their success. If their dreams of having fulfilling lives, interesting careers, good wages and better living conditions were to become a reality, then these factors and attributes must have fertile grounds.

Thus, personal educational aspirations and academic investment may be indicators of students' attitudinal and behavioral attachment to conventional academic

values. These measures appear to be based on students' own decisions about what they will strive for academically, how their previous investments have paid off socially, and whether they believe continuing to invest in academic pursuits is worthwhile (Braddock, Royster, Winfield, & Hawkins, 1991; Geary, 1988).

According to Wilson-Sadberry, Winfield and Royster (1991), plans and aspirations are related to later educational attainment, particularly among African-American males. Geary (1988) found that those African-American students who "defied the odds," and were academically successful in high school expended a great deal of effort in academic pursuit and displayed a positive attitude. They also participated in class and extracurricular activities (especially athletics), exhibited good coping skills, demonstrated determination, self-motivation and a belief in themselves.

Rosenberg and Simmons (1971) conducted a study in Baltimore, Maryland, with 2,625 elementary and secondary students that examined the association between academic achievement and self-esteem of African-American and White students. Rosenberg and Simmons (1971) explained that a person with "high self-esteem does not consider himself better or worse than others, and low self-esteem means that the individual lacks respect for self, considers himself unworthy, inadequate, and seriously deficient as a person" (p. 9).

In examining the association between self-esteem and academic success, Rosenberg and Simmons (1971) studied the relationship between self-esteem and report card grade of elementary and secondary students. They reported that "Schools in our society are concerned with comparing, measuring, and evaluating the merit and worth of the child, and the evaluations are manifested overtly in the form of tests and report card grades" (p.88). Rosenberg and Simmons (1971) reasoned that if grades are not good, then those who saw the report card might have a negative image of the student, which was a possible cause of low self-esteem. Report card grades affect

self-esteem because students may base their self-worth on grades, which represent academic success or failure.

However, in the state of Maryland, students' scores on the Rosenberg and Simmons' (1971) self-esteem scale indicated that grades had less effect on self-esteem of African-American students (effect size .11) than on white students (effect size .28). In another body of work, Graham (1994) argued that African-Americans' self-concept was not lower than their counterparts, even though their academic performance was consistently lower.

In summary, Rosenberg and Simmons (1971) conceptualized self-esteem as the positive or negative attitude that one has of self. Both kinds of attitudes were based on personal qualities and what the individual viewed as important enough to value. Therefore, based on Rosenberg and Simmons' (1971) theory of self-esteem, African-American students who performed poorly did not value grade-point average as a measure contributing to their self-esteem.

In Graham's (1994) review of over 100 studies on motivation of African-Americans, three topics were examined: (1) locus of control, (2) expectancy of success, and (3) self-concept of ability. Graham (1994) investigated the hypothesis that African-Americans were more likely to believe in external locus of control than in internal locus of control results.

Graham (1994) defined locus of control as "the generalized beliefs about the causes of outcomes and reinforcements" (p. 69). She explains that locus of control has two poles: (1) internal locus of control and (2) external locus of control. She states, "(I)ndividuals who think of themselves as completely responsible for their own behavior and reinforcements" (p. 69) operate within internal mechanism. For example, individuals who exercise internal controls are more likely to believe that achievement is related to self-ability and self-failure based on personal effort. On the

other end of the continuum are individuals who operate with external mechanism.

Graham (1994) defined these individuals as ones who "... neither blame themselves for failure nor view success as caused by their own efforts and abilities" (p. 69). In terms of academic success, external individuals are more likely to believe that their effort or their intellectual ability did not cause their success.

Graham (1994) reported that African-Americans had lower aspirations than Whites. There was an association between the socioeconomic status of Black families and future outcomes as perceived by their children. Children from families with high socioeconomic status would also score high on measures of aspirations, and children from families of low socioeconomic status would score low on those same measures. The results showed that African-Americans reported that poor current performance did not mean that future outcomes would also be poor (Guggenheim, 1969). Ogbu found similar results in his 1971 ethnographic study. He concluded that there was no association between poor academic performance and future aspirations. Graham (1994) reported that for mid-socioeconomic African-Americans, their aspirations were high if their current success was high and low if there was current failure. In summary, African-Americans more often than Whites expect future success (Graham, 1994; Ogbu, 1971).

According to Graham (1994), "The general pattern of high academic self-concept among African-Americans was relatively uninfluenced by social class distinction" (p. 98). This finding was true of Black and White fifth graders who were administered Brookover's Self-Concept of Ability Scale. In light of Graham's findings, it appeared that African-Americans determined that their socioeconomic status is not related to their aspiration, academic ability, and their self-concept. They continue to aspire to achieve and earn a comfortable living (Ogbu, 1971). Rosenberg

and Simmons (1971) posited that African-Americans ascribe to those beliefs as a means of protecting their self-esteem.

In summary, African-American students do not view poor academic performance as a predictor of their future success. They do not associate their academic performance with their self-concept. As Graham (1994) also concluded, "A motivational psychology for African-Americans must incorporate a range of cognitive and affective determinants of behaviors" (p. 105). Graham contended that when studying motivation among African-Americans, the affective domain should be incorporated. She agreed with Rosenberg and Simmons (1971) that African-American students do not relate academic performance to their self-esteem. However, academic achievement does matter to African-American students and academic achievement is related to one's personal aspirations.

In conclusion, the literature on motivation relating to African-American males suggests that many African-American males have personal educational goals, make commitments to educational goals and remain invested in their educational pursuits. Many African-American males exhibit locus of control, participate in extra-curricular activities, demonstrate positive coping skills, have self-efficacy and expend effort toward a predetermined goal of which education is the key. The motivation of African-American males who achieve academically despite environmental circumstances seemingly makes an internal investment to education and expend energies to the completion of their goal of which education plays a major role. Additionally, students who have self-efficacy and expend effort toward a goal seemingly posse characteristics associated with the concept of persistence.

Persistence

Introduction

Persistence, one of the most important behavioral qualities in an academic setting, was defined as continuous effort when confronted with a difficult or insolvable task (Ayres, Cooley, & Dunn, 1990; Feather, 1962; Valencia, 1994). Students frequently struggle with or face temporary confusion in their attempt to master new information or problem-solving strategies. Students who fail to persist in the face of such difficulties may be handicapped in their achievement (Ayres, Cooley, & Dunn, 1990; Torgesen & Licht, 1983).

Students who do persist seemingly have self-efficacy, a motivational correlate of persistence. According to Bandura's (1977) self-efficacy theory, self-efficacy expectations, which refer to beliefs about one's ability to successfully perform given tasks or behaviors, may be important mediators of behavior and behavior change. Expectations of personal efficacy were hypothesized to influence one's choice of behavior settings and activities, as well as how much effort will be expended and how long one will persist in a course of action in the face of obstacles (Avery & Cooley, 1991; Schunk, 1981, 1983).

Hackett and Betz (1981) suggested that efficacy beliefs were related to people's range of perceived career options, and to persistence and success in chosen fields. Lent, Brown, and Larkin (1984) found that students' beliefs about their ability to complete the educational requirements of various sciences and engineering fields were predictive of subsequent academic performances. Students reporting relatively strong self-efficacy generally achieved higher grades and were much more likely to persist in technical or scientific majors over a 1-year period than were those with low self-efficacy.

According to Bandura (1971, 1981, 1982), different procedures change behavior in part by creating and strengthening a sense of self-efficacy. Self-efficacy referred to personal judgments of how well one could perform actions in specific situations that may contain ambiguous, unpredictable, and stressful features. People acquire information about their level of self-efficacy through self-performances, vicarious means, verbal persuasion, and physiological indexes. Although self-performances provided valid efficacy information, efficacy judgments were not mere reflections of those performances. Efficacy appraisal was an inferential process that involved weighting the relative contributions of both ability and non-ability factors. These factors were self-perception of ability, amount of effort expended, task difficulty, amount of external aid received, situational circumstances under which the performance occurred, and temporal patterns of successes and failures (Bandura, 1981, 1982).

Bandura (1997, 2001) argued for a transactional view of self and society in which ". . . internal personal factors in the form of cognitive affective, and biological events; behaviors; and environmental events all operate as interacting determinants that influence one another [from each direction]. . . . [each] influence will vary for direction activities and under different circumstances (Bandura, 1997, p. 6).

Although the self-efficacy model originally was employed to explain coping behaviors in fearful situations, research extended the framework to other contexts such as cognitive skill acquisition (Schunk, 1981, 1982, 1983). Later research explored how children acquired information about their self-efficacy, and how self-efficacy affected subsequent achievement (Schunk, 1989).

Because self-efficacy was postulated to have motivational effects, it seemed especially relevant to students' achievement behaviors. Students who have a strong sense of efficacy in a given subject matter would be expected to exhibit strong

achievement outcomes. In contrast, students who perceive themselves as inefficacious tended to shun achievement tasks, to engage in them halfheartedly and give up readily in face of obstacles. Therefore, it follows from this theory that experiences designed to raise self-efficacy should also enhance persistence and skillful performance.

Elements of Persistence

Feather (1962) reviewed studies of persistence. The review had two primary purposes. The first purpose was to identify the different approaches to the investigations of persistence with humans. The second purpose was to clarify the relationship of persistence at a task and motives and expectations.

Feather (1962) found that the background research on persistence fell into three fairly distinct classes. The first class comprised studies that were concerned with persistence as a trait or uniformity in behavior. The second class of studies comprised those with humans who were concerned with the problem of resistance to extinction. The third class of studies comprised those in which persistence was conceived as a motivational phenomenon.

Feather (1962) suggested six main conclusions from his survey of the literature. The first conclusion was that studies of persistence may be classified into three main groups. The second conclusion was that trait studies of persistence were personality oriented and concentrated on stable characteristics of the person. The third conclusion was that studies of persistence conceived as resistance to extinction were situationally oriented and concentrated on properties of the immediate situation. The fourth conclusion was that studies that conceived persistence as a motivational phenomenon in general took both personal and situational parameters into account. The fifth conclusion was that the motive to succeed was greater than avoidance of failure and that the more difficult the task the higher the degree of persistence. The

sixth and most conclusive finding was that persistence was a motivational phenomenon. Persistence, then, was seen globally as a behavioral correlate of motivation (Cooley, Ayres & Beaird, 1994; Feather, 1962; Maehr & Braskamp, 1986; Multon, Brown & Lent, 1991).

Stephen N. Campbell (1992) conducted a study to examine factors influencing persistence behaviors among African-American students. Campbell (1992) studied the concept of persistence as it related to factors and attributes among African-American students enrolled in two Catholic schools in the Washington, D.C. area. Participants for the study were 80 fifth and sixth graders -- 40 males and 40 females ranging in ages from 11 to 13.

The purpose of the study was to explore the relationship between levels of aspiration, achievement motivation, manifest anxiety, and intelligence as they impacted persistence behaviors. The second purpose was to determine whether the independent correlations were the same for males and females. The third purpose was to determine whether the pattern of subsets of independent variables was the same for males and females.

Each subject was given four different tasks to perform to determine persistence. To measure persistence, subjects were given five puzzles to solve within five minutes. Although all five puzzles appeared solvable, the second, third and fourth puzzles could not be constructed using the pieces available.

On measure of persistence, Campbell (1992) concluded that not only did females show less persistence, in general, than males, but there was a plateau effect for females. For males, there was increase in persistence across tasks.

In order to ascertain achievement motivation, subjects were interviewed privately to obtain a measure of achievement motivation. Four pictures were administered to all subjects with a set of directions that required subjects to perform a

written task. The level of aspiration measure showed a significant effect for gender with males. Males demonstrated higher levels of achievement than females.

To determine manifest anxiety, all subjects were given a short form of the Children's Manifest Anxiety Scale (Levy, 1958), a modification of the Taylor Adult Form (Castaneda & McCandless, 1956). Subjects were required to answer "yes" or "no" to each question. There was no significant gender difference.

To establish criteria for intelligence, the brief form of the Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children-Revised (WISC-R) was administered to participants. There was no significant gender difference.

Campbell (1992) found that females were less persistent than males. This finding was similar to previous works conducted by Dweck and Gilliard (1975); Dweck and Rappucci (1973); and Schofield (1943) who found that females' performance had a tendency to decrease and males' performance had a tendency to increase under conditions of evaluative pressure. Campbell (1992) also found that females' performance had a tendency to decrease and males' performance had a tendency to increase under conditions of evaluative pressure. Of primary importance, however, was the plateau effect shown by females in trials two and three; yet, an increase in persistence over all trials for males.

In looking at achievement motivation and persistence, males' scores were significantly higher than females' scores. The observation that highly motivated individuals work longer on the puzzle may have generated implications for predictions of success. Perhaps during the course of growing up, males are motivated to achieve much more than females (Tyler, 1956).

On levels of aspiration and persistence, Campbell (1992) concurred with Bayton (1943). Bayton's theory postulated that the need to do well and avoid failure operates in such a manner that the individual with the higher level of aspiration should

have a greater incentive to perform more effectively than the one with a lower level of aspiration.

Results regarding levels of aspirations also revealed gender differences. Males demonstrated significantly higher levels of aspirations than females. This finding was also supported by McClelland, Atkinson, Clark, and Lowell (1953) and Schofield (1943).

The correlation between manifest anxiety and persistence, although negative, was not statistically significant. This was anticipated since the items chosen for the development of the scale used in this study were selected only if they showed no gender difference.

When the influence of levels of aspirations upon both achievement motivation and persistence among males was controlled, the correlation between the two decreased. When comparing the correlations for males and females, results indicated that females sustained a greater loss when the influence of levels of aspirations and persistence were controlled.

Campbell (1992) concluded three major points: (1) There are striking gender differences in persistence behaviors, levels of aspirations, and achievement motivation; (2) data showed quite clearly that the combination of levels of aspiration and achievement motivation was the best predictor of persistence for males and females; (3) anxiety and intelligence scores did not increase in predictability of persistence behavior in any significant way.

In a similar study, Valencia (1994) conducted a study of persistence among academically successful Mexican-American university male and female students. Valencia examined the degree to which five personal academic attributes and five motivational variables were found among a sample of academically successful Mexican-American males and females students. These students were in their final

semester of university studies for the baccalaureate degree at a California State University in the Central San Joaquin Valley. A total of 162 students -- 21 (42%) male senior students and 26 (52%) female senior students -- participated in the study.

The questionnaire used in the study included a rating scale of 1 to 7 to indicate the degree of importance that the students placed on each of the five personal attributes and each of the five motivational factors. A pilot study was conducted on 10 students - 5 male and 5 female Mexican-American students. The five personal attributes analyzed in the study were scholarly inquisitiveness, persistence, responsibility, concentration and attentiveness. The five motivational factors analyzed in the study were interest in getting a better job, inclination toward scholarly studies, interest in pursuing studies, desire to affiliate with university students and faculty and opportunity to participate in athletics or competitive sports.

Persistence was given the highest rating by male students, whereas responsibility was given the highest rating by female students. Conversely, female students gave persistence the second highest rating, whereas male students gave responsibility the second highest rating. Both male and female students gave attentiveness the third highest rating and scholarly inquisitiveness the fourth highest rating. Both male and female students rated concentration last.

In reference to the five motivational variables, getting a better job or earning a higher income was given the highest rating by female students, whereas interest in pursuing studies was given the highest rating by male students. Conversely, male students gave getting a better job or earning a higher income the second highest rating, whereas female students gave interest in pursuing studies the second highest rating. Inclination toward scholarly studies was given the third highest rating by male and female students, and desire to affiliate with university students and faculty was given

the fourth highest rating by both groups of students. Opportunity to participate in competitive sports received the lowest rating for each group of students.

Cooley, Beaird and Ayres (1990) conducted a similar study using fifth grade students. They hypothesized that fifth grade students' attributional styles regarding academic successes and failures were moderates of persistence in academic tasks.

The study had two purposes. The first purpose was to compare behavioral persistence measures to teacher ratings of persistence. The second purpose was to examine one cognitive variable, attributional style.

Subjects were all 160 students enrolled in the eight fifth-grade classes in a rural community in Western Oregon with a population of 10,000. After all students had completed the Sydney Attributional Scale, a random sample of 5 girls and 5 boys was drawn from each classroom for the individually administered persistence tasks. Because of school absence and incorrectly completed questionnaires, the final sample included 72 of the 80 subjects originally selected.

Attributional style was assessed using the Sydney Attributional Scale (SAS) (Marsh, 1984; Marsh, Caines, Relich, Barnes, & Debus, 1984). This 72-item scale provided a description of a specific situational outcome. Three attributional explanations measuring ability, effort, and external causes were rated. The accuracy of each attributional statement was rated by the students using a 5-point scale ranging from "False" to "True."

Teacher-rated persistence was assessed using two types of measures, a teacher rating form and behavior tasks. The teacher rating form consisted of eight statements. The teacher rated each statement on a 3-point scale: Never, Sometimes, Always.

Cooley, Beaird and Ayres (1990) reported inconclusive results. Results from this study suggested that although the behavioral tasks were highly correlated with each other, neither was related to the teacher ratings of persistence. The teacher rating

of persistence used in this study was reliable and showed evidence of content validity, but it was not clear that teacher-rated persistence was a "more valid" method of persistence assessment.

Children's attributional style was related to teacher-rated persistence, but not to behavioral persistence measures. The data from the Sydney Attributional Scale suggested that the key elements of attributional style relating to teacher-rated persistence were ability and effort; in particular, the regression revealed that the SAS scale providing a significant unique contribution was the Reading Ability scale. Children who were more likely to explain successes by taking personal responsibility and viewing success as indicative of their ability were also rated as more persistent by their teachers.

Cooley, Beaird, and Ayres (1990) also concluded that teachers may have been responding in a global manner to those students who seemed to be more positive about themselves and schoolwork. The positive relationship between the Reading Success Ability scale and teacher-rated persistence may also reflect self-efficacy effects. Individuals who explained successes as being due to ability could be expected to have self-efficacy in facing a specific academic task. As Multon, Brown and Lent (1991) observed in their mega-analysis, self-efficacy had been fairly consistently related to persistence in academic settings.

Multon, Brown and Lent (1991) attempted to present an extensive analysis of the available literature. The mega-analysis was two-fold: (1) It incorporated all appropriate studies relating self-efficacy beliefs to academic performance and persistence outcome; (2) it employed a quantitative meta-analysis methodology, as opposed to a narrative review strategy.

Multon, Brown and Lent's (1991) findings suggested that self-efficacy beliefs were generally related to academic behaviors in ways that supported Bandura's (1977,

1982) theory and its extension to educational-vocational behaviors (Hackett & Betz, 1981; Schunk, 1996, 1989; Schunk & Gunn, 1986). Multon, Brown and Lent (1991) concluded, in part, that it would be valuable to construct and evaluate strategies for promoting the self-efficacy belief of diverse student populations. Although they stated with some confidence that self-efficacy beliefs related to important performances and persistence variables in academic context, they concluded that more research was needed to explore their findings.

In summary, self-efficacy is seen as a motivational correlate of persistence. Self-efficacy refers to one's belief about self-ability to successfully perform given tasks or behaviors. Self-efficacy influences one's choice of behavior. Persistence is seen as a behavioral correlate of motivation. Persistence refers to how much effort one will expend and how long one will continue in a course of action. Therefore, one's personal decision to continue with a task or behavior could be tied to one's personal belief about self-accomplishment. Additionally, personal aspirations and goals were predictors of persistence behaviors toward the completion of a task.

While self-efficacy and persistence are indicators of academic successes, believing in self and expending effort toward a task require the individual to employ protective mechanism when faced with obstacles. What are the protective mechanisms that come into play when an individual faces obstacles in maintaining self-efficacy and persistence? How do academically successful African-American males maintain measures of academic achievement?

Resilience

Background

The increasingly high number of at-risk middle and high school students -- those in danger of dropping out of school because of academic failure or other

problems -- is a major concern in education. Students living in at-risk conditions, in particular, show persistent patterns of underachievement and of social maladjustment in school, leading to their failure to finish high school.

An interesting approach to helping these students succeed is to examine the notion of "resilience." Despite incredible hardships and the presence of at-risk factors, some students develop characteristics and coping skills that enable them to succeed. They appear to develop stable, healthy personas and are able to recover from or adapt to life's stresses and problems. Even in the most stressful homes there are some children who appear to develop stable and healthy personalities. These students could be termed resilient (Winfield, 1991).

The body of research on the health and psychiatric factors of resilience provided an alternative to the current educational conceptualization of at risk (Winfield, 1991). Resilience is concerned with individual variations in response to risk (Rutter, 1987). Some people succumb to stress and adversity whereas others overcome life's hazards.

Resilience is not seen as a fixed attribute of the individual, but rather as a protective mechanism that comes into play in critical points in one's life. For instance, those individuals who cope successfully with difficulties at one point in their life might react adversely to other stressors when their situation is different. If circumstances change, resilience alters. Resilience, then, is conceptualized as a protective mechanism that comes into play during critical turning points in one's life (Rutter, 1987). A student's decision to remain in school when he or she sees few job opportunities, receives no support or incentives, and experiences negative peer pressure is an example of an individual's resilience during a critical transition to adulthood (Winfield, 1991). Very little is known about the source of resilience;

however, in order to move beyond simply identifying and categorizing youth as at risk, the focus has shifted to understanding the notion of resilience (Winfield, 1991).

Werner (1984) stated that resilient children had four central characteristics in common. First, resilient children have an active, evocative approach toward solving life's problems that enables them to negotiate successfully an abundance of emotionally hazardous experiences. Second, resilient children have a tendency to perceive their experiences constructively, even if they cause pain or suffering. Third, resilient children have the ability, from infancy on, to gain other people's positive attention. Fourth, resilient children have a strong ability to use faith in order to maintain a positive vision of a meaningful life (O'Connel-Higgins, 1983; Werner, 1988).

Werner (1984) further contended that resilient children operate within three protective mechanisms. One mechanism is within-the-child. Resilient children tend to have temperamental characteristics that elicit positive responses from family members as well as strangers (Garmezy, 1984; Rutter, 1990). Despite chronic poverty, discrimination, family discord, and birth complications, resilient children are affectionate, cuddly, good-natured and easy to deal with (Werner, 1988).

According to Werner (1988), these children meet the world on their own terms by finding refuge and a source of self-esteem in hobbies and creative interest. Additionally, these children play vigorously, seek out novel experiences, demonstrate self-reliance and a lack of fear. Yet these children are able to ask for help from adults or peers when needed. Furthermore, resilient children demonstrate sociability coupled with a remarkable sense of independence. Werner (1988) reasoned that protective factors operating within the self protected at-risk children from extreme problems.

The second protective mechanism operates within-the-family. Despite chronic poverty, family discord, or parental mental illness, most resilient children have the

opportunity to establish a close bond with at least one caregiver from whom they receive lots of attention during the first years of life. Hrabowski, Maton and Greif (1998) in Beating the Odds: Raising Academically Successful African-American Males recorded numerous student accounts of the relationship between caregiver and academic achievement among academically achieving African-American males.

Some of the nurturing might have come from substitute caregivers within the family, such as older siblings, grandparents, aunts and uncles. Such alternative caregivers play an important role as positive models of identification in the lives of resilient children, whether they are reared in poverty (Kellam, Branch, Agrawal & Ensminger, 1975) or in a family where a parent is mentally ill (Kauffman, Grunebaum, Cohler & Gamer, 1979) or coping with the aftermath of divorce (Wallerstein & Kelly, 1980).

Werner (1984) further postulated that resilient children seem to have been imbued by their families with a sense of coherence (Antonovsky, 1987). They manage to believe that life makes sense, that they have some control over their fate, and that God helps those who help themselves (Murphy & Moriarty, 1976). This sense of meaning persists among resilient children, even if they are uprooted by wars or scattered as refugees to the four corners of the earth. It enables them to love despite hate, and to maintain the ability to behave compassionately toward other people (Ayala-Canales, 1984; Moskowitz, 1983).

Werner (1984) stated that the third protective mechanism that operates in resilient children is outside the family. Resilient children find a great deal of emotional support outside of their immediate family. They tend to be well liked by their classmates and have at least one, and usually, several close friends and confidants (Garmezy, 1993; Kauffman, Grunebaum, Cohler & Gamer, 1979; Wallerstein & Kelly, 1980; Werner & Smith, 1982).

Additionally, resilient children tend to rely on informal networks of neighbors, peers, and elders for counsel and advice in times of crisis and life's transitions. They are apt to like school and do well in school, not exclusively in academics, but also in sports, drama, or music. Participation in extracurricular activities or clubs could be another important informal source of support for resilient children (Braddock et al., 1991). Even if they are not unusually talented, they put whatever abilities they have to good use. Often they make school a home away from home, a refuge from a disordered household. A favorite teacher becomes an important mode of identification for resilient children whose own homes are beset with family conflict and dissolution (Wallerstein & Kelly, 1980).

In his studies of London schools, Rutter (1987) found that good experiences in the classroom could mitigate the effects of considerable stress at home. Among the qualities that characterized the more successful schools were the setting of appropriately high standards, effective teacher feedback by the teacher to the students with ample use of praise, the setting of good models of behaviors by teachers, and giving students positions of trust and responsibility. Children who attended such schools developed few if any emotional or behavioral problems despite considerable deprivation and discord at home (Pine, 1984).

Werner (1984) concluded that the central component in the lives of resilient children that contributed to their effective coping appeared to be a feeling of confidence or faith that things would work out as well as could be reasonably expected, and that the odds could be surmounted.

In summary, resilient children teach us that self-efficacy, persistence and resilience can develop and be sustained, even under adverse circumstances, if children encounter people who give meaning to their lives and the reason for commitment and caring. Each of us can impart this gift to a child.

Additionally, resilient children, seemingly, have protective mechanisms that come into play in adverse, stressful or critical times in their lives. These protective mechanisms seem to be fostered by an innate ability to negotiate emotionally hazardous experiences as resilient children exercise faith, demonstrate self-efficacy, and receive support from a caregiver and informal networks. It appears that these protective mechanisms influence academic achievement among students whose environment puts them at risk.

Elements of Resilience

The factors that relate to resilience can be organized into four categories: individual attributes, positive use of time, family, and school (McMillan & Reed, 1993; Peng, Lee, Wang & Walberg, 1992; Werner, 1984). Peng, Lee, Wang, and Walberg (1992) conducted a large-scale study to determine predictors of academic success in families. High intrinsic motivation and internal locus of control seem to enable resilient at-risk students to succeed. Peng et al. (1992) found that locus of control was a significant predictor of academic success. Students with high academic achievement tended to have a more internal locus of control than lower academic achievers. They also found that successful students had higher educational aspirations than non-resilient students.

Peng et al. (1992) concluded that family composition seemed to have no significant relationship to at-risk students' success or failure. Students living with both parents did not necessarily have a higher level of resiliency than students in single-parent families or other family compositions. Instead, good parent-child relationships and supportive attachment appeared to act as protective factors from the environment. Parents who were committed to children provided informal counseling, support and help in achieving success.

The educational background of parents was related to student resiliency. Peng et al. (1992) found that less than 11% of students whose parents had less than a high school education were classified as resilient students compared to 23% of students whose parents had a high school education or beyond.

Peng et al. (1992) concluded that individual attributes and family factors contributed to academic success of at-risk students. Resilient students had higher educational aspirations and felt more internally controlled than non-resilient students. These students interacted more often with their parents and their parents had high educational expectations for them. Approximately, 19% of students who could have been classified as at-risk became individuals who had success in school, with positive goals and plans for the future. These results were consistent with previous findings about resilient children (Block, 1980; Garmezy, 1984, 1988; Rutter, 1987).

McMillan and Reed (1993) reported similar findings. In a qualitative study of the perceptions of academically successful at-risk students, McMillan and Reed (1993) cited characteristics of at-risk students reported in Self's (1985) review of the literature on at-risk students. Characteristics of at-risk students were grouped into three primary domains. According to McMillan and Reed (1993) and Self (1985), characteristics of at-risk students resided in the domains of (1) social/family background, (2) personal problems, and (3) school factors.

McMillan and Reed (1993) found that sibling or parental dropout, low socioeconomic status, dysfunctional family, and lack of parental educational status and parental communication skills between home and school were descriptors of social and family descriptors of at-risk students. Additionally, membership in an ethnic or racial minority group and living in inner city, urban areas were descriptors of social/family background factors of at-risk students.

Descriptors of personal problems characterizing at-risk students were external locus of control, learned helplessness, suicide, substance abuse, low self-esteem, teenage pregnancy, trouble with the judicial system, learning disabilities, lack of life goals, lack of hope for the future, significant lack of coping skills, working many hours per week and having responsibilities of raising one or more children.

McMillan and Reed (1993) found that school factors also paralleled Self's (1985) findings of characteristics of at-risk students. School factors were behavioral problems, absenteeism, lack of respect for authority, feelings of alienation from school, grade retention, suspension/expulsion, tracking/ability grouping, dissatisfaction and frustration with school, lack of available and adequate counseling possibilities, school climate, and students who did not conform to "fit the norm" of the school's organizational structure.

McMillan and Reed (1993) further found in their study of the perceptions of academically successful at-risk students that students spoke of satisfaction gained from experiencing success in self-fulfilling activities. These students were motivated by desire to succeed, to be self-starting, and to be personally responsible for their achievement. They attributed poor performance to internal factors such as lack of effort, not caring, not studying as much as they needed, goofing off, and playing around. Most respondents thought that poor-performing students could do better if they put in more work and got serious about school. A strong sense of self-efficacy was important. Students saw themselves as being successful because they had chosen to be so and gave much credit to themselves.

McMillan and Reed (1993) found that resilient children made positive use of their time. Active involvement in extracurricular events at school and in other areas such as clubs and church seemed to provide a refuge for resilient students. Hobbies, creative interest, and sports helped to promote the growth of self-esteem. Being

recognized and supported for special talents was also important. Additionally, simply being involved in an activity considered special appeared to increase self-esteem and a belief in one's ability to succeed (Coburn & Nelson, 1989; Geary, 1988; McMillan & Reed, 1993; Werner, 1984).

McMillan and Reed (1993) reported that school factors such as a network system and teachers contributed to resilience among successful academically at-risk students. Geary (1988) and Coburn and Nelson (1989) concurred with McMillan and Reed (1993) in that resilient students credited parts of their success to school staff who had taken a personal interest in them.

McMillan and Reed (1993) concluded that resilient at-risk students had a set of personality characteristics, dispositions, and beliefs that promoted their academic success regardless of their background or current circumstances. They had an internal locus of control and healthy internal attributions. Resilient children took personal responsibility for their successes and failures and showed a strong sense of self-efficacy. They felt that they had been successful because they had chosen to be successful and had put forth needed effort. They credited and validated themselves. They had positive expectations about their abilities, the future, and an optimistic perspective with realistic long-range goals. A strong sense of hope was accompanied by a belief that doing well in school was necessary to doing well in life.

Lee, Winfield and Wilson (1991) addressed the phenomenon of African-American achievement differences from an inclusive perspective. They explored individual families and school factors as they related to achievement. They reasoned that while African-Americans generally scored lower on standardized tests than Whites, a considerable number of African-American students were high achievers. Achievement influenced self-efficacy and self-concept, which in turn promoted resilience among youth (Lee, Winfield, & Wilson, 1991).

In a study of high-achieving African-American eighth graders, Lee, Winfield and Wilson (1991) found that African-American students of higher achievement used their time positively (more reading, more homework, less television). Additionally, Lee et al. (1991) reported that the schooling processes that fostered high achievement and resilience in African-American students were important, above and beyond demographic factors.

Lee et al. (1991) concluded that process variables connected with schooling rather than family background explained important differences in achievement, and accounted for differences in academic behaviors among African-American students who were high and low achievers. Moreover, these processes facilitated resilience among students by increasing self-efficacy as well as opening up opportunities for future successes in school.

Braddock, Royster, Winfield, and Hawkins (1991) targeted academic resilience and academic achievement among African-American male athletes at the middle and high school levels. They conducted a study to determine whether African-American males' participation in athletics was related to their academic resilience. The study extended previous research in several ways. First, they examined the prevalence of school sports programs and minimum grade point average requirements for sport participation in U.S. public schools (which served eighth grade students). Second, they examined athletic participation patterns among African-American male eighth-graders by student background and school demographic and organizational characteristics. Third, they investigated the relationship between interscholastic and intramural athletic participation and academic resiliency for African-American eighth grade males using educational plans, peer status, and academic investment as indicators of academic attachment or resilience.

Three broad dimensions of academic resilience were examined: educational aspirations, peer status and academic investment. Academic investment was measured by student reports of social misconduct, attendance problems, academic unpreparedness, interest in class and academic effort (persistence).

Braddock et al. (1991) found some supporting evidence of the association between athletic participation and academic resilience for both interscholastic and intramural sport activities. Consistent with general patterns in the literature (Braddock, 2000), Braddock, Royster, Winfield and Hawkins (1991) found that sport participation was positively associated with African-American eighth grade males' aspirations to enroll in academic or college-preparatory programs in high school, to have definite plans to complete high school, and to attend college.

Additionally, positive links were found between athletic participation and several indicators of pro-academic investment behaviors and attitudes. Athletes were less likely to be involved in school-related social misconduct problems, more likely to look forward to core curriculum classes and less likely to be judged by their teachers as not giving full effort (persistence) in their class work. Braddock et al. (1991) concluded that several aspects of athletic participation may facilitate the processes of academic resilience and attachment for African-American male students.

Despite incredible hardships and at-risk status, some students appear to have developed characteristics and coping skills that enable them to succeed. They appear to have developed stable, healthy personas and were able to recover from or adapt to life stressors and problems. What enables these students, approximately 19% of at-risk students (Peng, 1992), to develop into healthy individuals who are active and positive parts of society, while the other 80% do not? There seem to be some common threads in the portrait of a successful student living in at-risk conditions.

Resilient students appear to have temperamental characteristics that elicit positive response from individuals around them. Personality traits, such as disposition for affection, good nature, and the ability to interact with others appear to relate to later successes. These students play autonomously (i.e., seek out new experiences, lack fear and seem self-reliant); yet they are able to ask for and receive help from adults if needed (Werner, 1984). Resilient students are intrinsically motivated, have an internal locus of control that enables them to succeed, establish a close bond with at least one caregiver, like school, participate in non-academic activities, have positive attitudes, and have informal networks. Additionally, teachers play an important role in resilient students' success, and family support seems to be an attribute of successful students who live in challenging circumstances.

In conclusion, the literature on resilient students seems to imply that a web of abilities and support enable them to be successful. These students seem to have a personal strength and temperament that allows them to search out help and become self-reliant. They are able to elicit help from others and tend to have at least one caregiver who has instilled a sense of hope and trust in them. Thus their view of the world is not negative despite some intense hardships. Parental involvement and support tend to be available to these resilient students. Finally, school is an important place for these youngsters. A strong school experience may help mitigate home and societal problems. Teachers and peers at school play an important role in resilient students' success, as do extracurricular events. All these pieces need to be understood in answering the question of why some students, especially African-American males, are academically successful. In the clearest sense, resilience seems to mean that individual protective mechanisms come into play in adverse situations.

In summary, the review of the literature clearly reveals that researchers have shifted their view of identifying students as at-risk to understanding that while some

students live in an at-risk environment, students are not necessarily at risk. Shifting one's thinking from viewing students through a deficit lens to viewing students through a strength-based model has in part led researchers to investigate variables associated with students who are beating the odds of their predictive circumstances.

One such approach is to consider the influences of persistence, a motivation correlate, and resilience on academic achievement among academically achieving students who come from risky environmental conditions. This approach removes the stigma of blaming the child for conditions over which he or she has no control and investigating personally held attributes of which he or she has control. Viewed in this manner, the critical issue in education is not who is at risk or how many factors one has to have to be considered at risk. Rather, the critical issue centers on identifying those academic behaviors associated with academic success.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Background

This study investigated the extent to which differences in motivation, persistence and resilience exist among academically achieving African-American high school males of similar academic status. Research findings of Astin (1982), Graham (1994), Hrabowski (1991), Hrabowski and Maton (1995), James (1990), and Nettles (1991) reported that academic achievement among African-American males was associated with non-cognitive and cognitive variables.

The motivation of African-American students involves stories of inspiration, opportunities within the school to excel, and personal plans of aspiration to achieve academically (Braddock et al., 1991; Geary, 1988; Graham, 1994; Hrabowski, 1991; Hrabowski & Maton, 1995; Winfield, 1991). These students are described as "beating the odds" of their predictive demise (Geary, 1988; Hrabowski & Maton, 1995). Spencer, Seaton and Harpalani (2000) suggested that this relationship is analogous to "the cognitive and affected linked psychological processes" (p. 4).

Those students who have "defied the odds" and were academically successful demonstrated qualities associated with motivation, academic persistence and academic resilience. Academic persistence is defined as continuous effort when confronted with a difficult or insolvable task (Ayres, Cooley, & Dunn, 1990; Feather, 1962; Valencia, 1991). Academically persistent students displayed good attitudes and expended a great deal of effort in academic pursuit. Additionally, they displayed belief in self,

exhibited good coping skills, demonstrated self-motivation, participated in class, demonstrated self-determination and participated in extracurricular activities, especially African-American males (Braddock et al., 1991; Geary, 1988; Winfield, 1991).

Academic resilience is defined as an individual's ability to "bounce back" from adversity to overcome negative influences that often block academic achievement (Rutter & Werner, 1984; Winfield, 1991). Resilient at-risk students were intrinsically motivated and demonstrated locus of control that enabled them to succeed. Additionally, resilient students had family support, were involved in extracurricular activities, enjoyed school and involved themselves in school-related activities (Coburn, 1989; Peng et al., 1991; Werner, 1984). In other words, personal factors, family factors, and school factors seem to promote resilience among at-risk academically successful students.

The methodology of the study is presented in this chapter; included are the research questions, statistical hypotheses, descriptions of the sample population, the methodology used to obtain the sample population, discussions on instruments, data gathering procedures and data analysis. A summary concludes the chapter.

Statement of Problem

The purpose of this study was to investigate the extent to which differences in motivation, persistence and resilience existed between two groups of African-American high school males. One group consisted of African-American male tenth and eleventh grade students enrolled in a general curriculum and maintaining a B or above average. The other group was high-achieving African-American males in tenth and eleventh grades who were enrolled in honors courses or advanced placement courses. More specifically, this study's intent was to investigate cognitive and non-

cognitive variables that might influence the academic achievement of these two groups. The following research questions were addressed.

Research Questions

1. Are there differences in the levels of motivation between two groups of African-American males with different academic achievement records?
2. Are there differences in the levels of persistence between two groups of African-American males with different academic achievement records?
3. Are there differences in the levels of resilience between two groups of African-American males with different academic achievement records?
4. What are the reasons for success given by African-American males in honors or advanced placement classes, related to motivation, persistence, and resilience?

Statistical Hypotheses

Guided by research questions 1, 2, and 3, this study tested the following hypotheses:

1. There are no statistically significant differences in the mean levels of motivation between two groups of African-American males with different academic achievement records.
2. There are no statistically significant differences in the mean levels of persistence between two groups of African-American males with different academic achievement records.
3. There are no statistically significant differences in the mean levels of resilience between two groups of African-American males with different academic achievement records.

Population and Purposive Sample

This study was conducted in high schools in a growing suburban school district in a mid-Atlantic state. The participants in the study were high school African-American males. At the time of this study, this school district had a total student enrollment of 24,134 students. Of this figure, 9,147 (37.9%) are African-Americans. African-American males represent 19.3% (4,650) of the total school population.

The combined population of the five high schools totals 7,186, which represents 29.7% of the total school population. The African-American high school student population is 2,420 (33.67%) of the total high school population. African-American males comprise 17% (1,236) of the total high school population.

Schools are the largest consumers of the county budget. In fiscal year 2001, the public school system's budget was about \$144 million, including approximately \$81 million from the county government.

In 1999, the district's composite score on the Scholastic Achievement Test (SAT) was 999 (greatest gains were from African-Americans). In 2001, public school students in the district increased their average score on the SAT by eight points, from 1,031 to 1,039. In 2004, the county's composite score was 1,047, an increase of eight points since 2001. African-American students in the district improved their SAT scores by 38 points, from 894 to 932.

Student participants in this study were selected from the five high schools located in different areas of the district ranging from low to upper middle income. The African-American student population at each of the schools in this study was at least 18% or above.

Quantitative Design

The first phase of the research was quantitative in nature. Two groups of African-American male students were selected for inclusion in this study. One group

consisted of tenth or eleventh grade students who were enrolled in one or more honors classes, or one or more advanced placement classes. The other group included students who were enrolled in general high school curriculum and were maintaining a B average or above. With parental permission, a survey was administered to students that measured their motivation, resilience, and persistence.

Only tenth and eleventh graders were selected for the study for three reasons. First, tenth and eleventh graders are in the midst of a critical time in their lives. Decisions are being made about their future education and what goals they wish to pursue. Second, high schools offer opportunities for more rigorous academic pursuit. Third, tenth and eleventh graders' academic track, for the most part, has been determined.

Ninth and twelfth graders were excluded from this study for two reasons. One, ninth graders are transitioning into high school from middle school. Transitioning from middle school to high school involves issues related to environment, organization, and personal challenges of finding self. Two, twelfth graders are exiting the high school and entering the world of work or institutions of higher learning. This transition involves completion of mandatory education and decision making regarding future plans.

Instrumentation

This researcher reviewed the literature cited in Chapter II to identify instruments to use to test the hypotheses for this study. Following is a brief description of the activities the researcher pursued to arrive at her decision. The researcher first contacted Dr. James Impara, Director, Buros Institute for Assessment Consultation and Outreach, University of Nebraska-Lincoln. Dr. Impara conducted a search of the Buros database and identified a number of possible tests for the

researcher to review. He recommended that she use the Buros web site to review the tests he suggested and also to access the ETS test collection. A sample of tests from both sources included School Achievement Motivation Rating Scale; Guide to Factor-Referenced Temperament Scales: Factor Persistence; Achievement Motivation; Achievement Motivation Scale; Measure of Achievement Motivation; Achievement Motivation Profile; and Motivation Assessment Scale. The two best possibilities emerging from this review were the Motivation Assessment Scale and the Achievement Motivation Profile (AMP).

The Motivation Assessment Scale states that its purpose is "designed to assess the motivation underlying problem behaviors so as to curb those behaviors." A more careful assessment indicated that this instrument would be inappropriate for this study.

The Achievement Motivation Profile is "designed to measure a student's motivation to achieve" and related personality characteristics. The population the test is designed to measure is students 14 years old and older, in high school or junior college. The authors are Mandel, Friedland, and Marcus (1996).

Two reviews of the AMP were conducted at the Buros Institute. One was done by Steven V. Owen, Senior Biostatistician, Department of Preventive Medicine and Community Health, University of Texas Medical Branch, Galveston, Texas. He states,

The Achievement Motivation Profile is a 140-item, self-report survey that primarily assesses achievement motivation. The purposes of the survey are to discover possible reasons for school underachievement and to assist in counseling underachieving students. . . . The focus of the AMP is contained in four general areas comprising 15 subscales. The practitioner familiar with Eriksonian developmental theory will see that these areas and subscores [are] contemporary. . . . The scale

arrangement is as follows: (1) Motivation for Achievement, with subscales (a) Achiever, (b) Motivation, (c) Competitiveness, (d) Goal Orientation; (2) Inner Resources, with subscales (a) Relaxed Style, (b) Happiness, (c) Patience, (d) Self-Confidence; (3) Interpersonal Strengths, with subscales (a) Assertiveness, (b) Personal Diplomacy, (c) Extroversion, (d) Cooperativeness; (4) Work Habits, with subscales (a) Planning and Organization, (b) Initiative, (c) Team Player. . .

.Internal consistency estimates of the 15 core AMP scales, calculated from the entire normative sample (N = 1,738), range from .58 to .84, with a median coefficient of .75. Stability estimates were calculated for a high school subsample (n = 122) over a 60-day interval; they ranged from .61 to .89, with a median coefficient of .83. (Buros, 2002)

A second review was done by Jay R. Stewart, Assistant Professor and Director, Rehabilitation Counseling Program, Bowling Green State University, Bowling Green, Ohio. He concludes,

The Achievement Motivation Profile (AMP) is a self-report instrument designed to aid education professionals and mental health clinicians, including psychologists and counselors, in assessing students' motivation to achieve and related personality characteristics. The AMP consists of 140 self-descriptive statements. . . . The responses produced 15 scale scores and three validity measures.

The AMP was standardized in the United States and Canada on 1,738 students, 14 years or older, in high school, junior college, or university settings. Fifty-five percent of the students were female and 10% of the students were ethnic minorities. Because the authors felt that there were only relatively minor differences among subgroups of

students as to ethnic group, gender, and country of residence, the AMP norms were based on the entire sample.

Reliability data were gathered for the AMP scales. The AMP scales produced the range of alpha scores from .58 to .84 with a median of .75. A test-retest period of 60 days for 122 Canadian high school students yielded reliability estimates ranging from .61 to .89 on the AMP scales.

The AMP concurrent and discriminant validities have been investigated. Mandel and Gavin (1991) found the Motivation for Achievement scale to correlate significantly with high school students' overall grade-point averages. A number of AMP scales discriminated significantly among students who were identified as falling in one of the following groups: (a) academic problems, (b) conduct disorders, (c) overanxious, or (d) both anxious and depressed (Mahy, in press). Additionally, their skills differentiated between achievers and underachievers (Mandel & Marcus, 1988).

The AMP can be a valuable tool in assessing students who show indications of academic underachievement. The wording of the test items is sufficiently simple to allow most students to complete the assessment tool accurately. (Buros, 2002)

Based on the information the researcher obtained from Buros reviews of the AMP, she contacted the publisher, Western Psychological Services, and was referred to Harvey P. Mandel, the senior author. Dr. Mandel recommended that the researcher obtain a copy of the AMP Manual, which she did. Correspondence was exchanged by e-mail between December 2002 and June 2004. On December 17, 2002, Dr. Mandel wrote, "It is clear from our research that the AMP differentiates between average-

achieving and high-achieving high school students." On January 5, 2003 Dr. Mandel said, "Regarding your three specific questions about the AMP: (1) Motivation: Yes, the achiever, motivation, and goal orientation scales, and in particular the achiever and motivation scales, do address the issue of motivation, and do distinguish among low motivated, average motivated, and highly motivated high school and post secondary students. (2) Persistence: Yes, the AMP Inner Resources scale does address the issue of persistence and does distinguish among low achieving, average achieving, and high achieving high school and post secondary students. (3) Resilience: This area is not as straightforward statistically and conceptually. You can conceptualize the internal and interpersonal strengths domains on the AMP as reflecting resiliency issues. But the relationship is not a direct or simple one." Dr. Mandel's e-mail was quite lengthy but in general, he felt that a measure of resilience could be obtained from the data.

Because this research was of interest to Dr. Mandel, he offered to supply the researcher with free copies of the survey and to provide free computerized scoring services. He worked with the researcher and her committee as a free consultant to suggest the appropriate statistical analysis until his sudden tragic death in June 2004.

Standardization of the AMP

The AMP was administered to 1,738 high school, junior college, and university students aged 14 and older, in both the United States and Canada. Forty-five percent of these students were male and 55% were female. Approximately 10% of these students were from ethnic minorities. Table 2 presents inter-scale correlations for the AMP, provided in the manual. For the most part, the correlations are in the modest range (.30 to .70). The weakest correlations are in the patience (PAT) and cooperativeness (COOP) scales, and a few are negative.

Table 2

Inter-scale Correlations for AMP

Scale	ACH	MOT	COMP	GOAL	RLX	HAP	PAT	SCN	AST	DIPL	EXT	COOP	PLAN	INI	TEAM
ACH	1.00	.69	.61	.68	.40	.48	.24	.35	.32	.44	.32	.08	.76	.52	.47
MOT		1.00	.62	.69	.51	.64	.41	.51	.33	.60	.40	.22	.74	.51	.46
COMP			1.00	.64	.60	.62	.05	.57	.65	.40	.54	-.29	.48	.81	.50
GOAL				1.00	.65	.67	.33	.67	.39	.48	.41	.11	.54	.55	.42
RLX					1.00	.69	.40	.75	.45	.48	.48	.13	.32	.52	.37
HAP						1.00	.40	.71	.39	.57	.55	.12	.37	.55	.52
PAT							1.00	.43	-.09	.66	.10	.70	.34	.01	.11
SCN								1.00	.45	.47	.47	.16	.30	.57	.29
AST									1.00	.26	.60	-.33	.22	.72	.35
DIPL										1.00	.62	.40	.47	.50	.59
EXT											1.00	-.11	.24	.74	.67
COOP												1.00	.21	-.27	.01
PLAN													1.00	.45	.33
INI														1.00	.56
TEAM															1.00

ACH=Achievement; MOT=Motivation; COMP=Competitiveness; GOAL=Goal Orientation; RLX=Relaxed Style; HAP=Happiness;

PAT=Patience; SCN=Self-Confidence; AST=Assertiveness; DPL=Personal Diplomacy; EXT=Extroversion; COOP; Cooperativeness;

PLAN=Planning and Organization; INI=Initiative; TEAM=Team Player

From "Achievement Motivation Profile (AMP)," by H. P. Mandel, J. G. Friedland, and S. I. Marcus, 1996, p. 43. Copyright 1996 by the Western Psychological Services, Los Angeles, California.

Table 3 provides data on test-retest reliability of the AMP. Ten of the 15 scales have reliability coefficients of .80 or above. The lowest, COOP, is .61. The data show that the survey has modest to strong test-retest reliability.

Table 3

Two-Month Test-Retest Reliabilities for AMP Scales for a Canadian High School Sample

Motivation for Achievement	
Achiever (ACH)	.84
Motivation (MOT)	.85
Competitiveness (COMP)	.69
Goal Orientation (GOAL)	.85
Inner Resources	
Relaxed Style (RLX)	.64
Happiness (HAP)	.89
Patience (PAT)	.81
Self-Confidence	.84
Interpersonal Strengths	
Assertiveness (AST)	.79
Personal Diplomacy (DIPL)	.83
Extroversion (EXT)	.85
Cooperativeness (COOP)	.61
Work Habits	
Planning & Organization (PLAN)	.85
Initiative (INI)	.83
Team Player (TEAM)	.74

Table 4 provides data on the internal consistency estimates for the AMP scales. Fourteen of the Cronbach alphas are .70 or above, showing that the alphas are strong. Only one scale, assertiveness, is below .70, at .58.

Table 4

Internal Consistency Estimates for AMP Scales

	Number of Items	Alpha
Motivation for Achievement		
Achiever (ACH)	13	.84
Motivation (MOT)	11	.74
Competitiveness (COMP)	15	.75
Goal Orientation (GOAL)	7	.74
Inner Resources		
Relaxed Style (RLX)	12	.79
Happiness (HAP)	8	.83
Patience (PAT)	12	.77
Self-Confidence (SCN)	11	.81
Interpersonal Strengths		
Assertiveness (AST)	8	.58
Personal Diplomacy (DIPL)	14	.70
Extroversion (EXT)	10	.78
Cooperativeness (COOP)	10	.70
Work Habits		
Planning & Organization (PLAN)	8	.72
Initiative (INI)	15	.74
Team Player (TEAM)	10	.79

Table 5 provides means and standard deviations for each of the AMP scales for White and Black students. The means for both groups are similar. The standard deviations for the Black students are larger in most cases than those for the White students. This is most clearly shown for Inner Resources and Interpersonal Strengths. The means are transformed t-scores with a mean of .50 and a standard deviation of 10 points.

Table 5

Average AMP t-Scores for White and Black Students in the Standardization Sample

	White Students		Black Students	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Motivation for Achievement				
Achiever (ACH)	51.8	9.0	52.6	11.3
Motivation (MOT)	52.2	9.7	51.8	10.1
Competitiveness (COMP)	51.5	10.1	52.5	9.6
Goal Orientation (GOAL)	49.9	9.8	51.8	10.7
Inner Resources				
Relaxed Style (RLX)	48.7	10.1	50.2	11.5
Happiness (HAP)	50.3	10.2	49.6	11.6
Patience (PAT)	49.4	9.4	50.9	12.1
Self-Confidence (SCN)	49.5	10.7	51.9	12.2
Interpersonal Strengths				
Assertiveness (AST)	51.2	10.2	52.3	10.7
Personal Diplomacy (DIPL)	51.1	10.1	52.9	12.7
Extroversion (EXT)	50.5	10.0	49.9	11.8
Cooperativeness (COOP)	50.3	10.1	49.6	11.1
Work Habits				
Planning & Organization (PLAN)	52.6	9.0	53.3	8.9
Initiative (INI)	51.9	10.4	54.1	10.9
Team Player (TEAM)	52.7	10.3	46.0	9.5

Based on Dr. Mandel's comments and his offer to help, and the researcher's careful reading of the manual, she decided to use the AMP survey for the quantitative part of her study. The researcher asked the director of research and the assistant superintendent in the county for permission to conduct the study. After obtaining the formal approval required, permission was granted.

The authors of the AMP maintained that their survey has construct, concurrent, and discriminant validity. They state that

construct validity may be inferred when a positive correlation is seen between the instrument in question and other measures intended to reflect a similar characteristic, and when relatively weaker or negative correlations are seen with measures intended to reflect substantially

different characteristics. *Concurrent validity* is claimed to be present when a positive relationship is observed between a measure of a particular characteristic and a standard criterion measure of that characteristic made at the same time. *Discriminant validity* is demonstrated when groups known to differ in the characteristics supposedly measured by a test are, in fact, observed to perform differently on the test in expected ways. (Mandel, Friedland, & Marcus, 1996, p.49)

Statistical Analysis

The researcher planned to use independent t-tests to look for differences between the two groups of students in terms of motivation, persistence, and resilience. The researcher also conducted correlational analysis and one-way analysis of variance. The researcher created an interview protocol based on her review of the literature and advice from experts in the field. Interviews were conducted with the honor students to learn more about their motivation, persistence, and resilience.

Qualitative Design

The second phase of the study was qualitative in nature. It attempted to clarify understanding and supplement findings presented in the quantitative portion of the study. This component of the study looked at adolescents who manage to "defy the odds" and succeed.

The methodology chosen solicited the students' perceptions about personal motivation, persistence and resilience as they relate to academic achievement. Detailed data were gathered through interviews with the participants. Ten students from the honors or advanced placement classes were chosen to be interviewed.

To assist in the formulation of questions for the interview protocol, the researcher contacted Dr. Kenneth Maton at the University of Maryland Baltimore County. Dr. Maton is co-author with Dr. Freeman Hrabowski of Beating the Odds (1992). Dr. Maton agreed to share interview protocols that he had used in earlier research. The researcher used some of the questions from these surveys to interview the students.

In order to determine the extent to which quantitative differences in motivation, persistence and resilience exist between two groups of African-American high school males with different academic achievement records, a survey was administered to both groups. A series of interviews was held with a sample of the high-achieving students. Only honors and advanced placement students were interviewed because it was believed that the students in the general curriculum group might not perceive themselves as high achievers and might be embarrassed by the questions.

Survey research is frequently used to collect data regarding opinions and exploring the relationship between variables (Borg & Gall, 1983). The purpose of descriptive research is to describe systematically the facts and characteristics of a given population or area of interest, factually and accurately (Isaac & Michael, 1990). Babble (1973) contends that one of the main purposes of survey research is to make some descriptive statements about a specific population.

Interview research is used to enhance quantitative survey findings and to discover the story behind a participant's experiences (Patton, 1990). Survey and interview studies that make comparisons and evaluations fall within the category of descriptive research (Isaac & Michael, 1990). Interview research allows the researcher to pursue in-depth information around a topic. Interviews may be useful as follow-up to further investigate responses (Patton, 1990). In this study, some

descriptive assertions are made regarding the relationship between academic achievement of African-American males in high school and three variables: motivation, persistence and resilience.

The researcher randomly selected ten African-American males who were enrolled in honors and advanced placement classes to be interviewed. Two other students enrolled in honors and advanced placement classes requested to be interviewed for the study. A total of twelve students were interviewed. The researcher contacted the students at each school through a vice-principal, a counselor, or a teacher who assisted the researcher in setting up a schedule to conduct the interviews. The school-based coordinator was careful not to schedule interviews during students' more rigorous classes, but scheduled interviews during the students' study hall periods or gym classes. The coordinator notified the student where the interviews would be held.

Once the researcher arrived at the schools, the students came to the predetermined area during their designated time. The researcher welcomed the students and explained the nature of the study and how the data would be used and disseminated. Each student was told that the interviews would be taped and verbatim transcribed by the researcher. Each student was given the questions to review (See Appendix E) and given the option of not answering a question(s).

The interviews took approximately 30 to 40 minutes, depending on the student's elaboration on the question. Some students were more verbal than others. At the end of the session, each participant was thanked for his attention and candor. Students' identification numbers were used to label the tapes.

To transcribe the data, each question was stated and the student's response followed. The researcher then looked for common themes for each of the three variables using the students' responses.

The researcher used *triangulation* to summarize the findings of this research (Marshall & Rossman, 1989). Triangulation is a technique used to bring more than one source of data to bear on a single point. In this study, three sources of information were brought together: the results of the quantitative data, the results of the qualitative data, and the information gained from the review of the literature. These three sources provided the information to answer the research questions stated here.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

Introduction

The plight of African-American males' quest toward academic achievement has been of keen interest to educators, parents and human service professionals (Ascher, 1991; Madhubuti, 1980; Maryland Commission on Black Males, 1998). Negative indicators such as chemical dependency, economical disadvantage, or minority status revealed that African-American males were experiencing difficulties functioning in a predominantly Eurocentric setting (Gill, 1992; Irvin, 1990; Jordon & Cooper, 2000; Wilson & Banks, 1994). The literature often cites African-American males as "endangered species" and as members of an "at risk" population (Ogbu, 1989; Strassburger, Rosen, Miller & Chavez, 1990). Predictive and problematic behaviors served as the basis for classifying these students as "at risk" and viewing these students as operating from a deficit model.

Despite predictive and problematic statistics regarding African-American males' achievement, some African-American males were achieving academically. Geary (1988) concluded that there was evidence to suggest that some African-Americans were achieving academically "despite the statistical odds." More recently, Hrabowski, Maton and Grief (1995) reported that some African-American males were "beating the odds" academically. Geary (1988) and Hrabowski, Maton and Grief (1995) seemed to support the contention that motivation to succeed was predicated on

both personal and situational parameters as measures of avoiding failure. These students seemed to operate from the strength-based mode.

Feather (1962) concluded that motivation was a catalyst for persistence at a task. Future plans and aspirations were tied to educational attainment, a key factor (Winfield, 1991). Persistence was seen as a correlate of motivation defined as "exerting effort" toward completion of a task.

The ability to "bounce back" to predetermined goals during difficult times was defined as resilience. Therefore, it seemed that students who "defy the odds" and achieve academically are motivated, "exert effort" and "bounce back" in the face of adversity. These students did not appear to fit into the deficit-based model but rather into the strength-based model.

The deficit-based model blamed the child for the environmental, economic and societal conditions over which he had no input or control. The deficit-based model was preoccupied with what was wrong with the student (Self, 1985). The seeming lack of particular abilities within the student was seen as a failure or inadequacy. In contrast, the strength-based model is in sharp contrast to the predominant preoccupation with what was wrong with the children, family and society (Werner & Smith, 1982). Lack of abilities within the child is not seen as a failure or inadequacy, and can often be explained by life circumstances. The strength-based perspective provides an alternative to deficit thinking and pathology (Rapp, 1998; Saleebey, 1998; Weick, Rapp, Sullivan & Kisthardt, 1989). This paradigm does not ignore nor deny that problems existed, but looks at the whole of the "picture" to help develop interventions based on the student's unique strengths.

This chapter provides an overview of the procedures and analysis used to investigate the extent to which differences in motivation, persistence and resilience exist between academically achieving African-American high school males. The

following section on data analysis provides a description of the results of data gathered from the survey instrument and student interviews.

Statement of the Problem

The purpose of this study was to investigate the extent to which differences in motivation, persistence and resilience existed between two groups of African-American high school males. One group consisted of African-American male tenth and eleventh grade students enrolled in a general curriculum and maintaining a B or above average. The other group was high-achieving African-American males in tenth and eleventh grades who were enrolled in honors courses or advanced placement courses. More specifically, this study's intent was to investigate cognitive and non-cognitive variables that might influence the academic achievement of these two groups.

Procedures

In order to conduct this study, permission was obtained from the Division of Research and Assessment in a mid-Atlantic public school system (Appendix A). Permission was also granted by the Human Subjects Review Committee (HSRC) of the university (see Appendix B). An e-mail was then sent to high school principals stating that the researcher had been granted permission to conduct the study. The researcher then met with each of the principals, explained the nature of the study, gained permission to conduct the study in their building and solicited their assistance in distributing and collecting the parental permission forms from the students.

Upon receiving all approvals, the researcher contacted the Division of Student Services to identify participants for the study. The Division of Student Services initially identified 39 tenth and eleventh graders enrolled in the general curriculum and maintaining a 3.0 and above grade point average. One hundred forty tenth and

eleventh graders enrolled in honors and/or advanced placement classes and maintaining a 2.5 and above grade point average were identified for inclusion in the study. A parental consent form was sent to the parents soliciting their permission for student participation in the study (Appendix C).

A second query, conducted to increase sampling size for group 1, yielded 83 tenth and eleventh graders enrolled in the general curriculum and maintaining a 2.7 average and above, instead of the 3.0 specified in the first query. These students' parents were sent a parental consent form soliciting permission for the students' participation in the study. After additional conversations with the high school administration and the parents, 64 tenth and eleventh graders enrolled in general curriculum agreed to participate in the study. Seventy six tenth and eleventh graders enrolled in honors and/or advanced placement classes participated. Twenty-seven of the tenth graders were enrolled in general curriculum and 37 tenth graders were enrolled in honors and/or advanced placement classes. Thirty-seven eleventh graders were enrolled in general curriculum and 39 eleventh graders were enrolled in honors and/or advanced placement. The 140 students who participated in the study were enrolled in one of five high schools in the county.

The procedure for collecting data for both groups in this study included:

- (a) distributing a survey instrument to 64 tenth and eleventh graders in the general curriculum and 76 tenth and eleventh graders in the honors curriculum, and
- (b) conducting an interview of 5 tenth graders and 5 eleventh graders enrolled in the honors and advanced placement courses. The researcher contacted the principal and set up dates and times to administer the survey and conduct the interviews.

Each of the five high schools was represented by at least one student. One high school had two students who requested to participate in the interviews. Permission was granted and therefore, twelve students were interviewed for the study.

No general students were interviewed because the interview questions were oriented toward African-American male students who were particularly successful in high school.

Description of Survey Instrument

The Achievement Motivation Profile (AMP) is an objectively scored, self-report assessment tool designed to be a measure of a student's motivation to achieve, along with related personality characteristics, interpersonal attributes, work style, and other qualities important for school success. The AMP is based on a theory of personality development (Roth, Berenbaum, & Hershenson, 1967) that provides a framework for assessment achievement and motivation. This framework, derived from the work of Erik Erikson (1963) and elaborated by Mandel and Marcus (1988), is based on the assumption that achievement and motivation are determined by many factors that interact to produce desired or less than desired performance. These factors affect performance for students in the academic setting, and strongly influence adult work performance as well (Mandel, Friedland, & Marcus, 1996).

To assess differences in motivation, the researcher used the section from the AMP entitled Motivation for Achievement. To assess persistence, the section called Inner Resources of the AMP was used. To assess resilience, the researcher used the Interpersonal Strengths section of the AMP. A sample of the answer sheet is found in Appendix D. These choices to measure were based upon the recommendation of Dr. Harvey Mandel, one of the authors of the instrument.

The survey instrument was administered to both groups of African-American males at their schools. An explanation of the nature of the study was shared with the students and students were assured that their responses were confidential. An orientation session for all participants was conducted in which the researcher

explained to the students the nature of the study, how the data would be used, and that an interview would be conducted with randomly selected students.

Description of Interview Instrument

To develop interview questions, the researcher interviewed Dr. Kenneth I. Maton, co-author with Drs. Freeman A. Hrabowski III and Geoffrey L. Greif of Beating the Odds: Raising Academically Successful African American Males (1998) and with Hrabowski, Greene, and Greif of Overcoming the Odds: Raising Academically Successful African American Young Women (2002). Dr. Maton shared sample interview questions that he and Drs. Hrabowski and Greif had used, that in his opinion were most effective in learning why African-Americans enrolled in the Meyerhoff Program were academically successful. These sample interview protocols were used to create twelve interview questions. Teachers of Advanced Placement classes in English, History and Physics and other teachers who had established relationships with many of the students through extracurricular activities reviewed the questions. The researcher explored this option as a means of determining the appropriateness of the questions since teachers were most familiar with students' cognitive and affective performance within the academic setting. Teachers provided significant feedback in shaping the broad questions as well as probe questions for the interview. Using this process, twelve interview questions were crafted for the study (Appendix E).

Collecting Data

The survey was administered in April and early May 2004 during the regular school hours in either the cafeteria or the guidance suite. At the end of each session, the researcher thanked the participants for their participation in this study.

After the administration of the survey at the high schools, students wanted to know if the researcher would return to conduct the interview and what was the likelihood of being interviewed. The researcher explained that students would be randomly selected to participate in the interview and there was a likelihood of inclusion in the interview. Students also commented that this was the first time (taking the survey) that they had been together as a group and they seemed pleasantly surprised and validated to see so many like themselves representing academically achieving African-American males. A similar theme was repeated at other high schools. Students made comments such as: "Hey, man, how did you get here? It must be a mistake..... , you're in the wrong place." "We need to meet like this more often." "Ms. Salley, why don't you come teach here?" Comments were lighthearted and without malice.

Interviews were conducted one-on-one during the regular school day with twelve students who had participated in the survey. Twelve questions were asked. Students were given the questions to review before the actual interview began and students were given permission to not respond to any questions that they felt imposing or too personal. Interviews were taped and took approximately 30 minutes. The interviews were conducted in late May and early June 2004 and were transcribed.

Analysis of Data

The answer sheets containing the students' responses to the survey were sent in special delivery envelopes to the Western Psychological Services in Los Angeles for scoring. The results were returned to the researcher on a disk in about three weeks. A similar set of data was sent to Dr. Mandel in Canada. The researcher printed the results from the disk and verified their accuracy with photocopies of the answer

sheets. The researcher received information on the students in both raw scores and transformed t-scores. Data were based upon raw scores.

The researcher computed Cronbach alphas on all 15 subscales for both the honors students and the general students to check the internal consistency estimates. The results are presented in Table 6. For the honors students, 11 of the 15 Cronbach alphas were .60 or above. Two were .50 to .59, one (cooperativeness) was .48, and planning and organization was .28.

For the general students, 9 of the 15 Cronbach alphas were .60 or above, two were .50 to .59, two were .40 to .49, planning and organization was .20, and cooperativeness was -.11. For both groups, the majority of the Cronbach alphas are considered to be in the modest to good range. Scores on planning and organization and cooperativeness were low to modest. One reason may be the small number of students in both groups when this table is compared with Table 4 in Chapter III, which is based on the AMP manual.

Table 6

Internal Consistency Estimates for AMP Scales for Honors and General Students

	Number of Items	Honors Students	General Students
Motivation for Achievement			
Achiever (ACH)	13	.64	.78
Motivation (MOT)	11	.66	.61
Competitiveness (COMP)	15	.68	.89
Goal Orientation (GOAL)	7	.61	.41
Inner Resources			
Relaxed Style (RLX)	12	.54	.57
Happiness (HAP)	8	.77	.81
Patience (PAT)	12	.78	.77
Self-Confidence (SCN)	11	.57	.54
Interpersonal Strengths			
Assertiveness (AST)	8	.60	.60
Personal Diplomacy (DIPL)	14	.61	.65
Extroversion (EXT)	10	.78	.83
Cooperativeness (COOP)	10	.48	-.11
Work Habits			
Planning & Organization (PLAN)	8	.28	.20
Initiative (INI)	15	.76	.86
Team Player (TEAM)	10	.70	.86

Next, the researcher computed correlation coefficients for both groups of students. These are displayed in Tables 7 and 8. In interpreting these tables, the researcher used an established set of criteria to make judgments about the significance of the correlations (Gliner & Morgan, 2000). First, a level of $<.05$ was used to identify those correlations that were statistically significant. Second, the correlations themselves were judged in the following manner. If the correlation was between 0.0 and 0.30, it was judged to be weak. If it was between 0.31 and 0.70, it was considered modest. If it was above 0.71, it was judged to be strong (Gliner & Morgan, 2000).

For both honors and general students, the majority of correlations were in the modest to strong range. All were statistically significant at the .01 level. Two areas for both groups, patience and cooperativeness, had surprisingly low correlations.

Table 7

Honors Students' Inter-scale Correlations for AMP

Scale	ACH	MOT	COMP	GOAL	RLX	HAP	PAT	SCN	AST	DPL	EXT	COOP	PLAN	INI	TEAM
ACH	1.00	.74	.73	.62	.43	.65	.01	.47	.53	.49	.54	-.02	.80	.76	.54
MOT		1.00	.62	.72	.62	.78	.16	.64	.50	.65	.65	.24	.71	.60	.65
COMP			1.00	.62	.51	.67	-.13	.51	.77	.51	.71	-.22	.60	.85	.70
GOAL				1.00	.71	.77	.29	.73	.54	.71	.66	.30	.48	.57	.63
RLX					1.00	.74	.32	.74	.55	.61	.62	.37	.32	.46	.54
HAP						1.00	.35	.75	.57	.76	.74	.37	.55	.63	.67
PAT							1.00	.44	-.22	.50	-.01	.78	.04	-.16	-.01
SCN								1.00	.46	.68	.66	.35	.41	.58	.47
AST									1.00	.45	.81	-.19	.47	.74	.53
DPL										1.00	.74	.43	.46	.56	.66
EXT											1.00	.04	.48	.76	.76
COOP												1.00	.07	-.25	-.01
PLAN													1.00	.58	.48
INI														1.00	.61
TEAM															1.00

ACH=Achievement; MOT=Motivation; COMP=Competitiveness; GOAL=Goal Orientation; RLX=Relaxed Style; HAP=Happiness;
PAT=Patience; SCN=Self-Confidence; AST=Assertiveness; DPL=Personal Diplomacy; EXT=Extroversion; COOP, Cooperativeness;
PLAN=Planning and Organization; INI=Initiative; TEAM=Team Player

Table 8

General Students' Inter-scale Correlations for AMP

Scale	ACH	MOT	COMP	GOAL	RLX	HAP	PAT	SCN	AST	DIPL	EXT	COOP	PLAN	INI	TEAM
ACH	1.00	.87	.83	.72	.68	.75	.43	.70	.70	.83	.77	.17	.91	.85	.84
MOT		1.00	.82	.77	.77	.77	.52	.78	.84	.86	.80	.24	.90	.82	.76
COMP			1.00	.79	.78	.91	.22	.71	.82	.82	.91	-.03	.73	.96	.88
GOAL				1.00	.84	.84	.39	.79	.78	.79	.81	.17	.66	.80	.70
RLX					1.00	.78	.52	.82	.70	.85	.80	.31	.61	.76	.70
HAP						1.00	.27	.75	.82	.82	.88	.08	.64	.90	.79
PAT							1.00	.65	.25	.63	.27	.82	.47	.23	.27
SCN								1.00	.66	.81	.73	.45	.67	.71	.63
AST									1.00	.71	.86	.04	.57	.85	.69
DIPL										1.00	.83	.40	.78	.82	.81
EXT											1.00	-.01	.69	.93	.84
COOP												1.00	.22	-.01	.06
PLAN													1.00	.77	.73
INI														1.00	.89
TEAM															1.00

ACH=Achievement; MOT=Motivation; COMP=Competitiveness; GOAL=Goal Orientation; RLX=Relaxed Style; HAP=Happiness;
PAT=Patience; SCN=Self-Confidence; AST=Assertiveness; DPL=Personal Diplomacy; EXT=Extroversion; COOP; Cooperativeness;
PLAN=Planning and Organization; INI=Initiative; TEAM=Team Player

Survey Findings

Research Question 1

Are there differences in the levels of motivation between two groups of African-American males with different academic achievement records?

Statistical Hypothesis 1

There are no statistically significant differences in the mean levels of motivation between two groups of African-American males with different academic achievement records.

Tables 9 through 11 present the results of independent t-tests based on honors and general students' responses to the Motivation for Achievement section of the AMP and the subtest combinations of achiever and motivation, and achiever, motivation, and competitiveness. The results of the independent t-tests show that the statistical hypothesis was accepted. There was no statistically significant difference in the means of the Motivation for Achievement section and the subtests. To ensure that this was correct, the researcher did one-way analysis of variance on the same main test and subtests. The analysis confirmed that there was no statistically significant difference in the means.

Table 9

Motivation for Achievement with Subtests Achiever, Motivation, Competitiveness, and Goal Orientation

	No. of Cases	Mean	S.D.	t-Value	D.F.	2-Tail Sig.
Honors Curriculum	76	169.87	18.97	.46	138	.65
General Curriculum	64	167.86	32.36			

Table 10

Motivation for Achievement with Subtests Achiever and Motivation

	No. of Cases	Mean	S.D.	t-Value	D.F.	2-Tail Sig.
Honors Curriculum	76	87.67	10.72			
				.08	138	.94
General Curriculum	64	87.48	17.39			

Table 11

Motivation for Achievement with Subtests Achiever, Motivation, and Competitiveness

	No. of Cases	Mean	S.D.	t-Value	D.F.	2-Tail Sig.
Honors Curriculum	76	144.91	15.67			
				.64	138	.52
General Curriculum	64	142.48	28.08			

Research Question 2

Are there differences in the levels of persistence between two groups of African-American males with different academic achievement records?

Statistical Hypothesis 2

There are no statistically significant differences in the mean levels of persistence between two groups of African-American males with different academic achievement records.

Tables 12 through 14 present the results of independent t-tests based on honors and general students' responses to the Inner Resources section of the AMP and the subtest combinations of relaxed style and happiness, and patience and self-confidence. The results of the independent t-tests show that the statistical hypothesis was accepted.

There was no statistically significant difference in the means of the Inner Resources section and the subtests. To ensure that this was correct, the researcher did one-way analysis of variance on the same main test and subtests. The analysis confirmed that there was no statistically significant difference in the means.

Table 12

Inner Resources with Subtests Relaxed Style, Happiness, Patience, and Self-Confidence

	No. of Cases	Mean	S.D.	t-Value	D.F.	2-Tail Sig.
Honors Curriculum	76	152.70	20.01	.94	138	.35
General Curriculum	64	156.34	25.69			

Table 13

Inner Resources with Subtests Relaxed Style and Happiness

	No. of Cases	Mean	S.D.	t-Value	D.F.	2-Tail Sig.
Honors Curriculum	76	77.09	10.60	.69	138	.49
General Curriculum	64	78.52	13.94			

Table 14

Inner Resources with Subtests Patience and Self-Confidence

	No. of Cases	Mean	S.D.	t-Value	D.F.	2-Tail Sig.
Honors Curriculum	76	75.61	11.23	1.04	138	.30
General Curriculum	64	77.83	14.14			

Research Question 3

Are there differences in the levels of resilience between two groups of African-American males with different academic achievement records?

Statistical Hypothesis 3

There are no statistically significant differences in the mean levels of resilience between two groups of African-American males with different academic achievement records.

Tables 15 through 17 present the results of independent t-tests based on honors and general students' responses to the Interpersonal Strengths section of the AMP and the subtest combinations of assertiveness and personal diplomacy, and extroversion and competitiveness. The results of the independent t-tests show that the statistical hypothesis was accepted. There was no statistically significant difference in the means of the Interpersonal Strengths section and the subtests. To ensure that this was correct, the researcher did one-way analysis of variance on the same main test and subtests. The analysis confirmed that there was no statistically significant difference in the means.

Table 15

Interpersonal Strengths with Subtests Assertiveness, Personal Diplomacy,
Extroversion, and Competitiveness

	No. of Cases	Mean	S.D.	t-Value	D.F.	2-Tail Sig.
Honors Curriculum	76	149.38	15.10	.80	138	.42
General Curriculum	64	146.81	22.60			

Table 16

Interpersonal Strengths with Subtests Assertiveness and Personal Diplomacy

	No. of Cases	Mean	S.D.	t-Value	D.F.	2-Tail Sig.
Honors Curriculum	76	79.71	8.34	1.15	138	.25
General Curriculum	64	77.61	13.13			

Table 17

Interpersonal Strengths with Subtests Extroversion and Competitiveness

	No. of Cases	Mean	S.D.	t-Value	D.F.	2-Tail Sig.
Honors Curriculum	76	69.67	7.60	.31	138	.76
General Curriculum	64	69.20	10.32			

Since the researcher had found no statistically significant difference in the means based on groups for motivation, persistence, and resilience, she tested for whether there was any statistically significant difference between honors and general

students on any of the 15 subscales. There were no statistically significant differences in any of the subscales. That analysis is not included in this dissertation because it would add little to the discussion.

The researcher did believe, however, that it would be useful to show all of the raw score means for the 15 subscales in one table. Table 18 presents the raw score means and their standard deviations for the honors and general students. The number of items in each subscale is also presented. It can be seen that the number of items affects the mean substantially. For instance, in the subscale Competitiveness, the raw scores could range from 15 through 75. An expected mean would be around 45 points. For honors students, in Competitiveness and Initiative, both of which have 15

Table 18

Average AMP Raw Scores for Honors and General Students

	Honors Students			General Students	
	# of Items	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Motivation for Achievement					
Achiever (ACH)	13	48.67	6.19	48.48	10.41
Motivation (MOT)	11	39.00	5.29	39.00	7.55
Competitiveness (COMP)	15	57.24	6.03	55.00	11.77
Goal Orientation (GOAL)	7	24.96	4.24	25.38	5.13
Inner Resources					
Relaxed Style (RLX)	12	41.86	5.97	42.95	7.83
Happiness (HAP)	9	35.24	5.40	35.56	6.95
Patience (PAT)	12	38.20	6.67	38.92	8.39
Self-Confidence (SCN)	11	37.41	6.59	39.91	7.16
Interpersonal Strengths					
Assertiveness (AST	8	28.55	3.90	27.75	5.77
Personal Diplomacy (DIPL)	14	51.16	5.81	49.86	8.38
Extroversion (EXT)	10	39.11	5.62	37.66	7.69
Cooperativeness (COOP)	10	30.57	4.91	31.55	6.91
Work Habits					
Planning & Organization (PLAN)	8	25.11	3.80	24.42	5.77
Initiative (INI)	15	52.42	6.87	51.53	11.11
Team Player (TEAM	10	39.79	5.08	37.63	8.01

items in their subscales, the scores are 57.24 and 52.42, respectively, well above the expected mean. For general students, the means were 55.00 and 51.53, again well above the theoretical mean. For Goal Orientation, which has only 7 items, the fewest in the survey, the scores could range from 7 to 35, giving a suggested mean of 21 points. For honors students, the mean was 24.96 and for general students, 25.38, both well above the 21-point theoretical mean.

To make the study of the subscale means easier, the researcher converted the raw score means to transformed t-scores, which had a mean of 50 and a standard deviation of 10 points. The results of this analysis are presented in Table 19.

Table 19

Average AMP Transformed (t) Scores for Honors and General Students

	Honors Students		General Students	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Motivation for Achievement				
Achiever (ACH)	53.92	8.80	54.19	13.75
Motivation (MOT)	51.91	9.22	52.14	11.91
Competitiveness (COMP)	54.41	8.83	51.69	15.68
Goal Orientation (GOAL)	53.57	10.28	54.66	12.18
Inner Resources				
Relaxed Style (RLX)	53.20	8.98	55.09	11.38
Happiness (HAP)	53.92	9.25	54.59	11.55
Patience (PAT)	54.78	10.25	55.97	12.77
Self-Confidence (SCN)	54.97	9.74	57.22	10.77
Interpersonal Strengths				
Assertiveness (AST)	55.16	9.28	53.58	12.92
Personal Diplomacy (DIPL)	53.83	9.69	52.20	11.27
Extroversion (EXT)	54.45	10.65	52.06	12.96
Cooperativeness (COOP)	50.80	9.01	53.44	14.26
Work Habits				
Planning & Organization (PLAN)	53.20	9.01	51.78	13.20
Initiative (INI)	54.28	10.79	53.61	15.56
Team Player (TEAM)	48.17	10.20	44.98	11.73

When compared with the Black students' transformed means presented in Table 5, Chapter III, in most cases the transformed score means for both the honors

and the general students were higher than the norming population. The data in Table 19 also show that although there was no statistically significant difference in the means, whether raw or transformed, the standard deviations in the transformed scores are always larger for the general students than for the honors students. This suggests there was a good deal more variance in the general students' group than in the honor students' group.

Interview Findings

Interview questions were aligned with research question 4.

Research Question 4

What are the reasons for success given by African-American males in honors or advanced placement classes, related to motivation, persistence, and resilience?

Interview Questions - Motivation

1. Who has been most influential in your academic career?
2. Name someone outside your immediate family who most influenced you in your academic career?
3. Were you ever accused of being a nerd, acting white or not being cool by your peers?

Student responses to the interview are recorded under the research variable matched to the interview question. Three interview questions (one, two, and three) addressed motivation. Question one and question two asked students to describe who influenced them in their academic career. Students' responses were:

"My mother because she had pressured me to do my homework and to study. She advised me to 'stay away from drugs, a lot of girls, and pay attention to your school.' My teachers influenced me 'cause they tell me to keep on moving through

these classes and don't try to slide through. I take AP and Honors. All the teachers really influence me."

"My parents and grandparents provide me with positive reinforcement ... that I needed my academics if I wanted to do anything after high school ... because you basically can't do much with just a high school degree beside little stuff." "The world ... more competitive ... wasn't that way with my mom and dad ... must challenge me."

"My coach gives me advice. He tells me about his son and when he (son) went to Harvard and how he wasn't doing so well when he first got there and what a shock it was for him (son). He's doing well now, but at first it was hard because there was so much to adjust to. So I need to stay focused and do what I got to do to be successful."

"My mom and daddy, mainly my mom ... she's still in college... I see how hard it is for her. When I ask her to help me with my work, she asks me if I have read the book first, if not she tells me to read the book first, then come to her. Daddy makes sure my grades are kept up. Mrs., my math teacher ... she encourages me. I can ask her for help. She gives me advice".

"When I lived in Philadelphia I saw everything on the streets. My mom moved us from Philadelphia to Maryland. My parents ... they've been on my back ... not gonna be a failure ... be one of the who actually go to school on a scholarship ... (they) didn't want me to follow my brother and how he made a mistake thinking the army would give him freedom. He regrets it now. (Parents) give me advice and say that God's always in your corner. Do the best you can and we're always here if you need us".

"My mother ... helps me do stuff like buying me stuff to help with assignments, stuff like talking to me about my problems, tells me to do my homework ... keeps me focused. Some coaches help me...just by saying stuff ... like sometimes they talk to the other boys and give them advice and I hear that and I think about what I heard."

"God and my mother. God ... head of my life. Mom when I'm down picks me up and my twin sister." "My girlfriend ... three keys, her, Mom, God, no girls want a dumb person."

"My mother... when I was young my parents separated. She stepped in and took that role... drove me to do well to show everybody that since I am a black male ... show everybody that I can do really well 'cause everybody is looking down on me and I have to prove them wrong." When asked if anyone outside his family has influenced him, his response was "No."

"My mother encourages me to go to college and excel." "I don't have a person but the ones who influenced me most were like teachers like they always have this stereotype of African-American in Advanced Placement or Honor classes that they probably won't do as well as Caucasian people. Especially it like be harder for African-American to get to the top of the list and you have to prove to them that you are smart. So they (teachers) can go like wow, he's really intelligent. I have to prove to them first that I am capable of doing well and give me my props ... like yeah, you did good on your test, you're smart." They (teachers) "give advice like organizational skills, study skills, advice like that."

"My parents. My mom checks up on me and she attends my school events like when I get an award she'll go my dad goes to. They both ask me questions about school and they keep track of what I do. Like I want to go out with my friends, I got to do my homework and they got to know who I'm going with and where I'm going. They tell me all the time that they care about me and what I do". "I don't look too much to teachers 'cause I got my parents."

"My parents, mostly, my dad. He's always telling me that I got to give 100% and be ready for what comes up 'cause you never know. You can't depend on people

'cause most people out here are for themselves so they don't really care about you. We hang out together sometimes and we go to church together".

"My parents - they say things to encourage me. My Daddy says things like I didn't do good in school and my mom says try your best. This boy I used to know. He went here. He was in AP classes, president of SGA, FEA and in a lot of other extracurricular activities. He was definitely an influence on me.

I just got to say my mom cause I live with my mom and been with my dad since I was 2 years old. She helps me with my homework, helps me with my projects, makes sure I do my summer projects and she makes sure I get them done on time. So I never get behind, so it's probably my mother. She got me a math tutor when I needed one in 8th grade so now I have two maths and so I'm ahead of the game. So I'll be taking calculus and maybe another math next year if I want to. She gives me advice to get my homework done so I don't have to stay up Sunday night and I can get seven hours or eight hours of sleep." Outside of my immediate family, my chorus teacher. Well, I have two of them. When I first came to middle school, Mrs. -, she was like the best teacher I ever had and she would ask me how I'm doing in school other than chorus and we went on a lot of trips and I got to know her really well. And her husband was my math tutor, got to go to her house. Her daughter and I went to elementary school together.

On Interview Question 3, were you ever accused of being a nerd, acting White or not being cool by your peers, the responses were:

"Yes, it happens sometimes but they were just playing. I take it as a compliment 'cause I know I'm smart."

Not really because I was around a lot of white people. If I didn't do my work, I didn't get to do anything. That's just how it was in the house. Most of the time you get to go out on weekend, but if you didn't do your homework you stayed in the house.

That's just simple. I tried to hide - like in middle school I didn't want to do work - I kinda wouldn't do - I just got tired of schoolwork and wouldn't do it - until interim came out.

"When a freshman ... not recently... all the people I hang out with are smart. Minimize my talents? Sometimes... don't want to act overbearing, too smart, if the teacher ask a question, I don't raise my hand ... to give other people a chance ... don't want to be a showoff ... people think you're a bookworm ... that's all you can be ... (It's) easy for me."

"... early stages I was called a nerd ... people see you got to do something to get out of C.C and the only way to get out is to keep grades up to par. I felt like an outcast but I got to do something with my life so they can call me whatever. I keep on doing work and pray and keep on doing my work. Hide my talents? That's me. If I made my success, I'm gonna talk about it. No bragging or anything."

"No".

"Nerd? No since elementary I've always been popular".

"No." No - hide or minimize! Because it doesn't matter what other people say. I just try to get good grades."

"No" I started like in lower classes and I moved up to AP classes in high school so I know many of the people in the school so it's like I don't associate with them. Hide? Sometimes like sometimes in class when I know the answer and others don't I just be quiet. Lots of people make stereotypes about lots of things so I just like to keep it for myself 'cause sometimes they think you are trying to be a show off. I don't like answering questions sometimes."

"Not by peers but by family members. I just ignored it. Hide? No, not really, I just "

"I mean if I don't know the answer I don't know just sometimes I just choose not to answer the question."

"Not since 5th grade. There was this one boy named who was bigger. At first he didn't know me and he would like say I was a geek. I didn't know what to think so I told me mother and we (the boy) became friends after that and I went with him and his dad to places and stuff."

Interview Questions - Persistence

4. What is the highest level of education you plan to complete beyond high school?
5. Do you believe you were always on the road to academic success?
6. What choices did you need to make along the way, which led to your academic achievement?
10. What stands out as most significant in getting you this far in your education?

On the question of persistence, four questions were asked. Question four was related to personal goal orientation. Question five was related to self-belief orientation. Question six was related to personal choice orientation. Question ten was related to significant contributor to academic achievement.

"I want to get a Ph.D. I want to go to law school become a lawyer or a doctor. I am going to try to get into Duke University or Stafford because they have basketball and a good college program. I'm taking a lot of AP classes to prepare me. Obstacle? Probably basketball 'cause I could end up playing basketball and spend all my time with it or I can spend all my time with academics." (Do you believe you were always on the road to academic success?) "Yes," and the choice made was "Should I continue sports or concentrate on academics." "The significant contributor was my mother just

probably like I was raised to continue doing my schoolwork and to maintain my focus."

... college bound ... Masters Degree in Sports Medicine and Physical therapy." (Do you believe you were always on the road to academic success?) "No not really ... 6th grade fine ... 7th not so good ... off the path. Daddy sat me down and said what you're doing now you won't be successful in life. At that age you really don't comprehend it that well. Once I got to high school, I understood it better and turned it around. The center of my life is my family. When I get in trouble, they find a way to help me. Only drawback is when I go to college, I won't have them to kick me in the butt and tell me to do my work. Benefit - They motivate me. They get on my case all the times. It's a good thing. I don't like it. They get on my case I get tired of hearing it. They mean well." "Choices - get focus, get goal in mind and do, just buckle down, and show effort because teachers don't want to fail you. Grades will improve and that's reward enough. It's a moral victory for self" "Significant contributor, I would have to say my parents first and then my coach. I saw how successful my parents have been and I just want to be as successful. We live in a nice neighborhood, nice house, they provide me with all I need, a car and a lot of things I want. I want to be and have the same things when I get older."

"College - a masters - a teacher in high school maybe - in history - my strongest area. Obstacle? financial but if I work hard I might get help. Choice? Not to hang out with people doing things I shouldn't be doing and try to find people to hang out with who were about what I was about."

"MD or lawyer." (Do you believe you were always on the road to academic success?) "Don't think about it too much. I know I am because I read a lot and very analytical. Reading is the key to success and I'm always gonna to be successful."

Choices - making the right friends." "Significant contributor is my belief in self achievement, my parents and Mrs. ____."

"Masters or Ph.D in sports management. ...need education to do everything. (Do you believe you were always on the road to academic success?) "Yes. My mom put in Scholars Program in grade 6 and God is the center of success. He makes you feel anything is possible so that's the benefit - no fear." "Choices - separation from friends ... see friends headed for trouble don't want that negativism around you so separate myself from them. Had to tell them I don't want to be around you 'cause you'll bring me down. I reward myself by giving myself a pat on the back." "My parents along with my desire to achieve have been my significant contributors to my success."

"Four year college... to go and explore ... get set up for what's coming." (Do you believe you were always on the road to academic success?) "Yes." "Choices - not to hang around people who will hold you back or give you information to keep you from performing well." "Significant contributor for the most part has been my mom."

"College ... sports management." (Do you believe you were always on the road to academic success?) "Most definitely! Because my education is tied to my future." Obstacles - everything has an obstacle but I have God in my life." "My significant contributors are God, my mom, my sister and my girlfriend."

"PhD in nuclear engineering." (Do you believe you were always on the road to academic success?) "Yes, because without my education I won't get a decent job, decent monies to fulfill my future plans." Obstacle "balancing my time." Choices - "Just to stay focus on my education and I'll be o.k." "Significant contributor other than my parents is my love of reading."

"Law school. The obstacles will "probably ... when I go to law school there are probably one or two predominately Black law schools and I'm gonna try to get into

the white law school. I don't have to go to a black school." My plan to overcome "...just study hard and do what I've been doing the last year. To get into a Black law school, I plan to get in a good school with a strong Political Science department, make A's and stuff like that. Maybe go to UCLA, Tennessee State, Howard, Hampton or Morgan." (Do you believe you were always on the road to academic success?) "D.C. has all of the stereotypes and I didn't even go to school that much when I lived there, not that much ... a boy got shot in my apartment building ... my best friend and my mom moved to county so I would not get hurt or nothing, and here I learned the importance of education. When I got here I made the choice to actually go to school, to study and actually focus in on my studies. Challenges were when I got here I had to check out my classmates' cause I knew I was really smart but like I didn't want to show it. And so I just went to my mom and she was like everything is going to be o.k. plus I had my older brothers who wanted me to do better than what they had done." "Significant contributor was my mom."

"Go to college ... haven't decided what to study ... just go." (Do you believe you were always on the road to academic success?) "Not all the times ... wondered about it ... let it go ... do the best I can." Obstacle - "getting the financial support." "Significant contributor is my family."

"Haven't decided yet. But gonna do something with what I got. (Do you believe you were always on the road to academic success?) "Oh, yeah, I believe in me and I got a higher power working on my behalf. Oh, yeah." Obstacles - "Haven't given it much thought. I guess I need to think about that." "Significant contributors are my parents."

"The top - a doctorate ... get my law degree. I get letters in the mail all the times. The National Forum on Law invited me and it had an official seal and everything on it. I can't because of technical and my financial situation right now. It

(receiving law brochures) started when I went to Travis Smiley's National Youth Summit that he had last year in D.C. Got a picture of him like right there and I'm standing like right here. And then I got another one from this other lawyer person and my mom said look at the price before you get excited. I asked the school but ____ (the principal) said that they get these all the time and that they can't be partial." (Do you believe you were always on the road to academic success?) Yes and no. Yes because of early struggles ... I guess like last year I slacked ... got three C's the first ever ... like from the summer readings and playing football and you have to go a lot during the summer and the other one C was in World History because the teacher gives so many assignments and that she checks it and there is not late credit or anything and I missed like two or three assignments and that set me back. I overcame that by studying for the test because in some classes I'm not a good test taker and in other classes I am a good test taker like in math, my favorite subject. The center of my life is church. I go to church. Lots of sermon learning there so I figure God like we always pray before our football games, I pray before test and before everything I have to do. The choices I've made is to give up a lot of friends' parties, lots of free time not a lot but more than I want to, holding off on driving school and stuff like that. When I'm giving up something I look at the rewards. I can always party after. Partying will always be there."

Interview Questions - Resilience

7. Please describe the most important experience, event or turning point that contributed to your academic success in as much detail as possible.
8. How did you balance social, extracurricular and academic interest (e.g., conflicting demands) in high school?
9. What types of academic problems did you experience in high school?

11. So many talented youth, especially African-American males and youths of other ethnic backgrounds, do not make it academically. Why do you think you have done so well? Please be specific.

Four questions addressed resilience. Question seven focused on behavior employed during critical times in their lives. Question eight focused on management of interests. Question nine focused on academic problems. Question eleven focused on obtaining insights through their perceptions of why some African-American males were not as academically successful as they were. Questions seven and nine asked students to respond to critical turning points in their lives and how they were able to balance their lives.

"In middle school I was the student of the year with a 4.3 grade point average and continued to be on the honor roll that has continued through high school. It (the award) gave me like a confident booster to maintain it and I have. To balance interest "Lots of people tell me to play lots of sports but that will affect my school work so I play only one sport spent the rest of the day doing homework or working on my academics." On academic problems "AP classes that I took were very difficult but if I wanted to do good and get college credit. So the motivation is less time in college less monies paid. Mainly my choice was to continue to concentrate on my schoolwork. It was a matter of where I wanted my future to be either with basketball or as a lawyer or doctor."

"Turning point - Middle school ... from honor roll to 2.3 just barely getting by. My interim - two D's and an F. I mean that was the turning point. I was on punishment for like two year straight. I was on punishment from 7 to 8 grades. Only time I wasn't on punishment was grade 6. That was a turning point, I couldn't do anything. Yeah, my dad pulled me off the baseball team, couldn't watch T.V but for 30 minutes a week. I couldn't do anything. I learned that you have to work a lot

harder and to stay out of trouble. I don't bring bad grades home anymore." "Balance - That's pretty hard. Don't go out during the week. Don't have time. Academics and football are one of the same for if you don't have the academics then no football. I get it done." "Problem - Two AP classes more like a challenge, a college class, ...learn something new everyday if you don't pick it up, you got to go back and pick it up. Latin - had four hard academic classes ... went to tutoring for AP classes, spend additional time on classes at home. Made sure I read over everything and studied it."

"Turning point - I dropped below a 3.0 grade to a 2.9. That was not good. I'm self-competitive and in competition with my sister. I like to win." "Balance - academics come first. Don't just put it off. Sometimes, I wasn't able to go to games, gave up small things and I had to drop one AP class and focus on the others."

"Problem - Not really any, except dropping that one AP class because most of my friends, family especially my aunt have bachelor or master degrees so I still see myself as successful."

"Like in middle school, I wasn't even pressed, never on the honor roll until 8th grade and that's when it hit me that I was headed for high school. And when I got here it was like why did I not work. When I look back at all the stuff I know now about grades and colleges, I would have worked harder in 6th grade."

"My brother's decision of going into the military was a turning point for me. He regrets his decision because he doesn't have the freedom he thought he would have. He was trying to take the short cut." On the question of balance - "School comes first, the rest follows. What's more important?" Types of academic problems 9th grade was a transitional period for me. There was more work ... overwhelming ... more to do. My brother helped me. He was a senior then and I was put on punishment."

"So many. My mom has lupus and when I found that out I wanted to find enough information to let her son know that he's doing all he can to help her. So when I get in a slump, I think about my mom and get myself back on track. It's like I jump off to get back on." "Balance? Selfdisciplined ... easy... you got to know how to position yourself ... like college... no one is going to be there tell you how and what to do." "Academic problem - a D in geometry at interim but pulled it up to a B before the quarter ended."

"It was when my mom had to go to Iraq and I had to move with my father for awhile. She had been around as my rock and when she left I had to apply her words to my work. I understood that she would not always be there for me and I had to take my abilities and use them without someone telling me to. Nobody is always gonna be there. I got to do it myself so I said to myself I can do and I had to excel higher than anyone else so I made sure I had my work done. I didn't want to disappoint my mother." On the question of balance - "I just do my best." On the question of academic problem - "In grade 9 I tried to fit in and started slacking off because I was too worried about what other people thought but after that I got it together."

"I think the D.C. thing. I think if my friend had not passed away, I would not have done what I did 'cause it was a wake-up call and my mom just wanted me to do something with my life. I'm different today because he was my best friend and like we grew up together we spent 10 years and it was hard getting over it. I really don't know how I balance everything. I'm SGA treasury for the county now for three years, member of CCSS, FEA, FBLA and Captain of the Track Team for two years and a 4.1 grade point average."

The turning point for me was "when my mom asked me what college I want to go to and all of them are out of State so I said I need a scholarship. My GPA is pretty good just make sure my SATs are all right and this was halfway during my 9th grade

year, the turning point, and so I said I got to get at least a 3.7 every quarter, at least. I try to get a lot done in study hall 'cause you're on the bus and you don't take books on the bus to away game ... then when I get home I got to take a shower, eat and then I have to do the homework and so sometimes I get tired. I don't keep like a schedule but water-it-out. I really don't have any academic problems not really. The schoolwork sometimes ... it was the teacher the way she talked like in English ... she would give vocab sheets and the test would have different kinds of words other than the vocab sheets. Then you would read books sometimes, we read in class, sometimes we wouldn't and we would have to read on our own and she would give test but wouldn't tell us what things to look out for in the book so you could do good on the test. I always had to check up on her to make sure my grade was at least a B."

Responses to question eleven are recorded below. Question eleven is: So many talented youths, especially African-American males and youths of other ethnic backgrounds, do not make it academically - why did you do so well?

Question 12 was an open-ended question for the purpose of providing students with an opportunity to share with the interviewer any thoughts on the topic of African-American males that the interview questions did not explore and to bring closure to their experience.

"Because I don't care what my friends do and many people might care about their reputation. I tell everybody just think about the long run and their future. (Advice to me?) "Maybe after school tutoring."

"It's not that they don't want to be successful, it just that they need a supporting environment around them, nothing negative. They just have a lot of negative impacts around them that don't help them to succeed. Difficult situations might not be helpful. They need a personality and a kick to be successful". (Advice to me?) "Just I mean, whatever, you want to do, you can do it. Pretty much... it's just a matter of you doing

the work and putting in the effort to get something done. Some people tell you naw, that's not gonna happen but if you put in the work and you do what you have to do it will get done." (And when you put in the effort and you come to a roadblock, what advice would you give?) "You just ... I mean ... you're gonna face life's problems, something is gonna pop up and slow you down from what you're trying to do, you just gotta find a way to get around it. I mean everybody faces adversity and it how you react to that adversity that makes you the person you're supposed to be."

"They need balance in their lives supportive friends and they really need to like to succeed. You really got to like to achieve." (Advice to me?) "Keep trying. Be hungry...'cause they'll look back in 30 years and say I could have done the work."

"I didn't fall into temptation. Some let temptation rule what they have to do. They let temptation step too far into their goals. Some people don't have goals. Unfortunately, most of our race ... we don't have a father figure but I was fortunate enough to have both a father and mother figure supportive of me and I moved out of a bad life 'cause I used to live in Philly. I seen everything so like my mom said I don't want them living there. She got offered a good job so she said I can take this 'cause I don't want them living in this and that where we got our goals established. We don't want to be like them and be low-life. Want to something big in America. (So when you see these talented youth African-American males not performing well in school, what advice do you give them?) Talented wasted. You gotta do something ... like ... gotta stop what you're doing and get academics on track because you're not gonna be able to use your talents only ... gotta have a little bit of education to make it somewhere. McDonald's not gonna cut it all the times. You get a family and you'll be living paycheck to paycheck. Sometimes you're gonna struggle." (How do you feel about being an academically successful African-American male? Great! It's great 'cause most people expect you not to be. Most people expect you to not have a 3.0 and

above. When you tell them it's like... Oh, congratulations so you bring a smile to another person's face." (Advice to me?) Start them early ... like in middle school ... it's easier ... cause some of them have a mind like...it's open to ideas. Once you get to high school most of them got their minds set and they know what they're gonna do and they think they don't need anybody to help so they got it all. Don't take the easy way ... everybody can start with pre-algebra in sixth grade. There's always tutoring."

"I don't know. I guess some don't care."

"Lots of kids these days say it's not cool enough. It's not cool enough. I'm working. The more studying you do, the more cool. It's gonna come ... cause the way it is right now a lot of people wanna get smart and a lot that don't wanna get smart and I'm like why don't you wanna get smart? I'm like why don't you wanna get smart ... I'm like ... you just have to apply yourself. Basically, just get involved in anything that you can ... As you see with me ... sports ... and anything that comes your way 'cause we have opportunities ... and a lot of kids need to start stepping up to the plate and taking advantage of the opportunities." (Advice to me?) "The way you are right now ... I mean ... as far as doing the interviews. I mean that's doing a great job for me that I have contacts outside of this high school that's trying to build me up. So interviews, helping a lot ... Continue having the interviews. It is helping, you know."

Well, it's hard because people down on you for no reason. When they see your face they don't see your potential. They see you as a criminal." (Do you feel that when you met people?) "I try hard not to pay attention to it. Sometimes I do." (How do people show that to you?) "They try not to show much respect." (Can you think of an incident when you've seen that?) "Can't think of one off the top of my head but ...) (Advice to me?) Just teach them to look beyond what other people think!

"Yeah, like when I enter the classroom ... AP classes and a teacher might look at me like what are you doing here? Like the way I dress, they might think I'm a

hoodlum or something ... it's not always about our appearance." (Advice to me?) Like pick something that's important in your life and draw energy from it."

"It's never too late. Try not to get behind. It's hard to catch up especially if you have a heavy load. When you catch up, it's harder to maintain where you are at. Like when you're in a race and you let somebody get ahead of you, you have to use more energy to catch back up. If you stay ahead in the beginning it's not that hard to maintain the lead. Stay until you finish." (Advice to me?) Tell them that they can do it and there's no reason why they can't. God is there ... got a purpose."

"I tell everybody just think about the long run and their future." (Advice for me?) Maybe if they know somebody who is successful then they can ask them for help. Set up a support system for them."

"Just I guess it's just the fact of me being me. Other people don't have drive and don't have aspirations to make it through all the stuff (Advice to me). Just keep encouraging them."

"That's a wide barrier and some say it's the home and some say they weren't living in what they call a nice home. For instance, I have a friend with a 4.4 who some say don't live in a nice house. So it's not the home. I guess it's the person and if they really want to do it. So it's not ever about the house but it is if the parents are really involved at all. That had something to do with it but it's also about the person. You can get help from the teacher if you need help and you can make a difference. (Advice for me?) Do more of what you are doing."

The brief, yet meaningful, encounters with these academically achieving African-American males enrolled in high school offered this researcher a glimpse into the dimensional facets of the interwoven tapestries of their lives. The researcher found the students motivated, persistent and resilient.

In terms of motivation, students expressed connections to family, extended family, teachers, and community personnel. They spoke about their experiences with enthusiasm, acceptance, wonder, and determination to pursue their goals, of which academic achievement was paramount. The range of comments was varied, extending from parental and immediate extended family positive reinforcements to teachers, coaches, self-belief, and belief in a higher being. Comments such as "parents provide positive reinforcement," "teachers ... give advice like ... organizational skills... keep on moving through these classes and don't try to slide through....," "coaches ... talked about his son..." and the young men also responded "I have good grades" and "it's a matter of being focused... "on your goals...."

In terms of persistence, students expressed connections to family, extended family, teachers and community personnel. They spoke about the internal choices they made to remain committed to personal educational goals to which they attached themselves. They made choices to embrace family, participate in sports, deny friends, and partying (to some degree), for they were academically achieving. Comments were "...show effort...", "...have self-belief...", and "...believe in God...."

In terms of resilience, students expressed connections to family, extended family, teachers, community and critical personal turning events in their lives. The motivation of these children, their persistence and their resilience to accomplish their goals resided within themselves and the support systems surrounding them. "A turning point for me that made me 'bounce back' to my educational goals was when "...I saw my best friend killed" ... "my mom moved me....," "...my parents put me on punishment...", "my grades dropped...", and when "my mom had to go to Iraq...."

In essence, these academically achieving African-American males enrolled in high school expressed commitment to family, recognized and appreciated the efforts of others while self-regulating themselves toward personal goal attainments. Self-

regulation, or efforts to direct thoughts, feelings, and action toward the attainment of one's goals (Zimmerman, 2000) assumed increased importance in the psychological and educational literature. What began with research on self-control in therapeutic contexts expanded to such diverse areas as education, health, sports and careers (Bandura, 1997).

Most theorists of self-regulation emphasized inherent links with goals. A goal reflected one's purpose and referred to quantity, quality, or rate of performance (Locke & Latham, 1990). Goals involved different phases of self-regulation: forethought (setting a goal and deciding on goals strategies); performance control (employing goal-directed actions and monitoring performance); and self-regulation (evaluating one's goal progress and adjusting strategies to ensure success (Zimmerman, 1998).

Goals enhanced self-regulation through motivation, learning, self-efficacy, and self-evaluation of progress (Bandura, 1997; Schunk, 1995). Goals motivated people to exert effort necessary to meet task demands and persist over time. Goals directed individuals' attention to relevant task, behaviors to be performed, and potential outcomes. Goals helped people focus on the task, select and apply appropriate strategies and monitor goal progress. Bandura, (1997, 2001) argued for a transactional view of self and society, in which "... internal personal factors in the form of cognitive, affective, and biological events; behaviors; and environmental events all operate as interacting determinants that influence one another [from each direction] ... [each] influence will vary for direction activities and under different circumstance (Bandura, 1997, p. 6).

Therefore, personal motivation, persistence and resilience resided within the individual with support from the family, extended family, and other significant individuals. Motivation, persistence and resilience are enhanced through goal orientation.

The results of the interview findings, summary, conclusions and recommendations are in Chapter V.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

This chapter provides a summary of the study on motivation, persistence and resilience among academically achieving African-American males in grades 10 and 11 in a suburban mid-Atlantic public school system. The summary includes (a) an overview of the problem, (b) statement of the problem, (c) the research questions, (d) findings for each research question, and (e) conclusions and recommendations.

Overview

There have been many endeavors to discover variables that seem to underpin academic achievement of African-Americans. For nearly a century, researchers have studied academic performance in people without equal access to schooling and with low academic achievement. Researchers concluded that academic achievement for African-Americans is related to intellectual ability, access, equality, financial resources, personality, independence, and self-esteem (Finn, 1989; Guggenheim, 1969; Horn & Chen, 1998; Lavin, 1965; McNeal, 1995, 1997; Schunk, 1996; Washington, 1901; Woodson, 1933).

From Woodson (1933) to Rowan (1996), there is agreement with Ladson-Billings (1994) that quality education is an honored right for African-Americans because education is associated with social and economic gains. Educational failure is associated with legal denial of access to education. Quality education simply means

attitudinal accessibilities to counter educational failure among all students and for the purpose of this investigation, academically achieving African-American males.

Researchers have investigated academic achievement of African-American males to identify variables that question how academic achievement occurs, and variables that provide insights into how academic achievement is sustained (Astin, 1982; Graham, 1994; Hrabowski, 1991; Hrabowski & Maton, 1995; James, 1990; Nettles, 1991). These researchers reported that academic achievement is associated with non-cognitive variables as well as cognitive variables.

Given the descriptors of at-risk students and the current status of African-American males, it appears that African-American males are an "endangered species." However, while African-American males share factors associated with at-risk behaviors, there is evidence to suggest that some African-American males are achieving academically "defy the statistical odds" (Geary, 1988; Hrabowski, 1991; Hrabowski & Maton, 1995). The students who "defy the odds" and achieve academically can be viewed as students operating from the strength-based model (Natriello, Dill, & Pallas, 1990) as opposed to operating from the deficit model. What, then, are the variables associated with academically achieving at-risk African-American males?

On examining the literature associated with academically successful African-American males, in addition to motivation, two terms surfaced within the body of research. Academic resilience and academic persistence were cited as possible variables influencing academic achievement among students (Braddock, 2000; Cunningham & Spencer, 2001; Dupree, Spencer & Bell, 1997; Martin, 1985; Rutter, 1987; Swanson & Petersen, 1998; Monk & Yonge, 1969).

Statement of the Problem

The purpose of this study was to investigate the extent to which differences in motivation, persistence and resilience existed between two groups of African-American high school males. One group consisted of African-American male tenth and eleventh grade students enrolled in a general curriculum and maintaining a B and above average. The other group was high-achieving African-American males in tenth and eleventh grades who were enrolled in honors courses or advanced placement courses. More specifically, this study's intent was to investigate cognitive and non-cognitive variables that might influence the academic achievement of these two groups.

Summary of Findings for the Survey

A summary of the survey findings for the research questions under investigation in this study is presented below.

Research Question 1

Are there differences in the levels of motivation between two groups of African-American males with different academic achievement records?

To answer this research question, the researcher used the Motivation for Achievement area of the Achievement Motivation Profile (AMP). The researcher computed independent t-tests of means to compare the honors and general groups. Using the four subscales—achiever, motivation, competitiveness, and goal orientation—she found no statistically significant differences between the two groups. This finding was also true using different pairings of the four subscales. To make sure that the statistics were correct, the researcher recomputed all of the independent t-tests using analysis of variance. The results confirmed the finding of no statistically

significant difference. The researcher also redid the analysis using transformed t-scores. Again, there was no statistically significant difference.

Research Question 2

Are there differences in the levels of persistence between two groups of African-American males with different academic achievement records?

Using the Inner Resources area of the AMP and its four subscales—relaxed style, happiness, patience, and self-confidence—to measure persistence, the researcher performed the same analyses as were used in Research Question 1. The statistical analysis showed no statistically significant differences in the means between the two groups. This finding was also true using different pairings of the four subscales.

Research Question 3

Are there differences in the levels of resilience between two groups of African-American males with different academic achievement records?

To measure resilience, the researcher used the Interpersonal Strengths area of the AMP and its four subscales—assertiveness, personal diplomacy, extroversion, and cooperativeness. The statistical analysis showed that there was no statistically significant difference in the means between the two groups of students in resilience. This finding was also true using different pairings of the four subscales.

The researcher then did independent t-tests and analysis of variance on all 15 subscales of the AMP, looking for statistically significant differences between the honors and general students. None of the analyses showed statistically significant differences in the means between the two groups.

Conclusions Based on Survey Results

Based on this study, the following conclusions were drawn about motivation, persistence and resilience between two groups of academically achieving African-American males enrolled in a suburban mid-Atlantic public education system.

The finding of no statistically significant difference between the two groups of students, honors versus general curriculum, is interesting. It suggests that the level of achievement in school and the curriculum track assigned by the school apparently do not significantly affect students' opinions of their motivation, persistence, and resilience. The general students had as high an opinion of themselves in terms of being motivated, persistent, and resilient as did the honor students.

The finding of no statistically significant difference between the two groups of students also indicates that the AMP was not as sensitive an instrument as the researcher had hoped it would be in identifying statistically significant differences between these two groups. The researcher concludes that she must continue to search for an instrument that is more sensitive to the differences between these two groups.

As a result of calculating means for all 15 subscales, using transformed scores, the researcher also concluded that both groups of students in this study had means that were generally higher than those in the standardization sample of Black students provided in the AMP manual (shown in Table 5, p. 79, of this dissertation).

Based on the standardized scores presented in Table 19, the researcher concluded that the students in the general curriculum had higher means in most cases than did the honors students and larger standard deviations, showing more variation among the general students than among the honors students.

Interview Findings

A summary of interview research findings for research question 4, investigated in this study, is presented below.

Research Question 4

What are the reasons for success given by African-American males in honors or advanced placement classes, related to motivation, persistence, and resilience?

Interview Questions - Motivation

Based on the findings of this study, parents, educators, and other significant individuals influenced African-American males' academic achievement, cognitive development and their self-efficacy and attitudes. The motivation of academically achieving African-American males involved personal stories of inspiration, opportunities to excel, and desire to achieve of which education was a key component. Academically achieving African-American males' attitudes of academic achievement were based on personal qualities and what they viewed as important enough to value. Educational aspirations were closely tied to future plans.

Interview Questions - Persistence

Based on the findings of this study, academically achieving African-American males displayed a great deal of persistence on academic tasks and displayed positive attitudes. They demonstrated determination, self-motivation, belief in self, and good coping skills and they participated in class and extracurricular activities, especially sports. These students viewed success as caused by their own efforts and abilities, therefore exercising internal controls.

Academically achieving African-American males, in this study, were self-efficacious and likely to undertake difficult and challenging tasks. They were likely to exert effort and to persist longer in the face of difficulties. Students who were self-efficacious appeared to use more self-regulating strategies, which lead to higher achievement. For instance, Pintrich and De Groot (1990) found that "self-efficacy was positively related to student cognitive engagement and performance. Students who

believed they were capable were more likely to use cognitive strategies, to be more self-regulating ... and to persist more often at difficult or uninteresting academic tasks" (p.37). African-American males were self-efficacious.

Interview Questions - Resilience

Based on the findings of this study, academically achieving African-American males were able to demonstrate resilience when faced with critical events or turning points in their lives. These critical events might have been the loss of a best friend, separation of parents, or a mother leaving the child to perform military duties. Other critical events might have been a drop in grades or transitioning from middle school to high school. These students displayed an array of social skills, a high degree of social responsiveness and sensitivity, intelligence, empathy, a sense of humor, an internal locus of control, and critical problem-solving skills. Additionally, academically achieving African-American males had access to social resources, such as caring parents, participation in extracurricular activities, and supportive teachers. Furthermore, parents were concerned with their children's education, participated in their education, directed their child's task and were aware of their child's interest and goals.

Interview Conclusions

Four themes appeared to enhance academic achievement among academically achieving African-American males in high school. Academic and social integration appeared to be critical factors in the success of highly able African-American males. A number of critical factors seemed essential for students' confidence and success. Among these are strong study habits, time-management skills, problem-solving capacity, a willingness to set and keep priorities and to have emotional support during times of stress and difficulties.

The interview revealed a complex tapestry of context involved in each youth's journey to academic success. Nonetheless, four common themes emerged. Specifically, the combined importance of determined and persistent parental academic engagement, strict discipline, child-focused love and community connectedness appeared important to counteract potentially negative contextual influences of neighborhoods, peers, school and society.

Determined and Persistent Parental Engagement.

The students reported incidents of parental influence in assisting them to succeed academically. Parents set very high expectations and engaged in diverse facets of their child's educational pursuit. This included an emphasis on the importance of education, consistent focus on high levels of performance, involvement in educational activities, advocacy for appropriate academic placements and providing structure and help with homework. The following quotes illustrate several of these themes:

When I was in grade six, my mom moved me to Scholar Program where I took advanced classes including algebra. Mom moved us from Philadelphia where I saw everything (on the streets) to Maryland for a better life. My parents were on my back ... I was not gonna be a failure. I would be one of the ____ who actually would go to school on a scholarship. My parents did not want me to make the same mistake as my brother.

My parents gave me positive reinforcement that I needed in my academic. If I wanted to do anything after high school, I had to buckle

down and focus. My parents told me that the world was more competitive and that I must challenge myself.

When I would ask my mother to help me with my homework, she would ask me if I had read it for myself. If I hadn't she made me go back and read it for myself, then come ask her if I needed help. My mom is working on her degree and that encourages me.

Setting Limits and Discipline

The students stated that their parents instilled in them a well-defined sense of appropriate and inappropriate behaviors. They believed that this focus on values positively guided their development and helped them control potential problems. Students recalled that punishment was not random but directed as a means of teaching them right from wrong in preparation for future events that could have serious consequences. The following quotes illustrate some of these themes:

In middle school I went from honor roll to 2.3 just barely getting by. On my interim report I had 2 Ds and a F. I mean that was the turning point for me. I was on punishment for 2 years straight. I was on punishment from grades 7 through 8. Only time I wasn't on punishment was 6 grade. That was a turning point. I couldn't do anything. Yeah, my dad pulled me off the baseball team, couldn't watch TV for any more than 30 minutes per week, could do anything. I learned that you have to work a lot harder and to stay out of trouble. I don't bring home bad grades anymore.

9th grade was a transitional year for me because there was more work, more things to do and I was overwhelmed. My grades slipped. My parents put me on punishment. If I didn't do my work, I didn't get to do anything. That's just how it was in my house. Most of the time you get to go out on weekends, but if you didn't do your work you stayed in the house. That's just simple.

Child-focused Love, Support, Communication and Modeling

The young men accentuated a high degree of love and support received from their parents. They were a primary focus of their parents' lives. Mothers in particular were viewed as providing nurturance, comfort, guidance, and understanding. Most who had a relationship with their father spoke positively about their relationship. Parents were seen as "being there when needed" and as having strong faith in their sons. Open lines of communication with parents were generally present, allowing discussion of such difficult issues as sex, drugs and crime. The love and encouragement received appeared to foster a belief in self and the power to achieve important personal goals, even in the face of great challenges. The quotes illustrate several of these themes:

In grade 6, I got off track. My grades were falling. My dad sat me down and told me that what I was doing now would not lead to success in life. At that age you really don't comprehend it that well. Once I got to high school I understood it better and I turned it around.

When I was 10 years old, I lived in Washington, D.C. I didn't go to school often and one day I saw my friend killed at the apartment. My mother moved me from Washington to Maryland so that I wouldn't get

hurt. Then I started going to school and realized the benefits of a good education.

I was young when my parents separated. My mom stepped in and took over the role and drove me to really do good... to show everybody that since I am a black male ... I can do well because everybody is looking down on me and I have to prove them wrong.

Community Connectedness and Resources

Beyond the nuclear family, the influence of extended family members, church, extracurricular activities, peers, and teachers was emphasized. In terms of extended family, grandparents and girl friends were seen as especially influential and as contributing to academic focus. Church attendance was often a regular, shared family activity, and for some, the church was a crucial source of support. Parental support for extracurricular activities, ranging from sports to dance to chess, was highlighted as critical. Positive peer influence was consistently emphasized. Finally, a number of students described a particular teacher or coach who took a special interest in them and motivated them to excel. Several of these themes are illustrated in the quotes:

When I was having difficulties with my math classes, my math teacher would work with me after school to break down the lessons.

My mentor, Coach, who has a son at Harvard tells me how hard it was for his son his first year to adjust and that doing well in high school by staying focus will help me in college.

My parents taught me that God was always in my corner. Do the best you can and we're always be here if you need us.

My grandparents serve as a source of support. They tell me basically that you can't do much with just a high school degree.

The common themes above were quite diverse in terms of specific challenges faced (e.g., troubled neighborhoods, negative peer influence, isolation in school) and the strategies that helped them meet these challenges. The qualitative methodology adopted illuminated the rich and varied routes to outstanding academic achievement in the face of many obstacles to such success.

Recommendations for Further Research

The students in this research study came from a relatively homogeneous area in a mid-Atlantic state. This area is suburban in nature. It is recommended that this study be replicated in an urban setting, again using African-American male honors and general curriculum students.

It is recommended that this study be replicated in a rural area where three groups of African-American male students are identified: honors, general, and a group who are performing poorly in the general curriculum.

It is recommended that the study be replicated using African-American females as the subjects in a similar environment and academic classification.

It is recommended that the study be replicated using two additional independent variables—free and reduced price lunch (FARMS) and socio-economic status (SES).

It is recommended that policy makers provide academically achieving African-American male high school students with self-selected opportunities to meet as a

group to validate their academic achievement and to solicit assistance from other similar academically achieving African-American males.

It is recommended that policy makers consider looking at school factors along with parental engagement as early as elementary and middle school for the purpose of sustaining academic achievement among academically achieving African-American males in high school.

Finally, it is important to continue to search the literature for an instrument more sensitive to differences between levels of motivation, resilience, and persistence than the AMP proved to be.

It would also be interesting to examine the results of the administration of the AMP to these two groups of students, attempting to identify items in any of the subscales that differentiated between the two groups and try to build a more sensitive instrument based on the AMP.

Appendix A
Permission from the Division of Research and Assessment

Research Request Status

Title of Study: Resilience and Persistence Among Academically Achieving African American Males

Author : L.d. Salley

Sponsoring Institution: University of Maryland

Telephone: (301) 932-6610

Date Received: _____

Approval Areas	Approval Code	Comments and/or Suggestions to the Researcher (Feel free to attach more comments)	Signature/ Date
Research Design	A		ECB 10/16/04
Data Collection Instruments	A		ECB 10/16/04
Content Area	A		ECB 10/16/04
CCPS School(s)	A		ECB 10/16/04
A = Approved AC = Approved pending changes RC = Resubmit with suggested changes R = Rejected			

Final Status

- ☒ Approved (A) ☐ Approved pending suggested changes (AC)
- ☐ Rejected (R) ☐ Resubmit with changes (RC)

Emily Cole Bayer
 Emily Cole Bayer, Ph.D.
 Coordinator of Evaluation, Division of Research and Assessment

16 Nov 2004
 Date:



JAMES E. RICHMOND
Superintendent of Schools

CHARLES COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Division of Research and Assessment

JOHN H. COX, Ed.D.
*Assistant Superintendent
of Instruction*

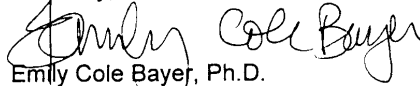
Dear Researcher:

Thank you for expressing interest in conducting your research study in our schools. We are enclosing the *Independent Research Request Form*. It is important that you respond to all items on this form. This will ensure the prompt processing of your request. We are also enclosing the Procedures and Standards for Conducting Independent Research for your review and signature.

Once our office has received the above completed forms, we will need approximately two weeks to process an approval request. This period may be longer or shorter depending on the completeness of the information provided, the complexity of the study, and the timely response of other departments and schools involved.

Within two weeks, you will receive correspondence advising you of the status of your request. You will then be able to contact the respective school(s) directly to plan and coordinate your visits.

Sincerely,


Emily Cole Bayer, Ph.D.
Coordinator of Evaluation

Enclosures

P. O. Box D • La Plata, Maryland 20646-0170 • (301) 932-6610 • (301) 870-3814 • FAX (301) 934-7401
Recorded Information 24 Hours A Day: (301) 934-7410

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Independent Research Request Form

Please complete this form in full. If spaces provided are not sufficient, submit an open-ended form that duplicates all headings and questions as they appear on this form. Failure to respond to any item may result in the rejection of this request. (NOTE: Respond with 'N/A' if a question does not apply to your study.)

RESEARCHER INFORMATION	
List the name(s) and title(s) of the author(s) of the study: Linda D. Salley	Telephone Number: 301-932-6610
Identify the institution/organization sponsoring the study: (Name, Address) University of Maryland College Park, Maryland	
OBJECTIVES:	
State the objectives of your study: To determine factors influencing academic achievement among African American Males	
Cite your research question(s): What is the relationship, if any, between resilience and persistence on academic achievement as measured by survey designed by this investigator	
State study rationale (Why is this study important?) Gathering information from students as to what they consider as factors attributing to their academic achievement, can provide educators understandings about condition	
How will data from this study benefit the school(s) studied or CCPS? that facilitate learning. Data can be used to identify indicators of academic success as well as inform instructional practices.	
DATA COLLECTION	
Identify the CCPS school(s) that will be involved in this study: All high school 10th and 11th African American Males who meet the criteria	
How much time overall will you need to collect all the data for your study? (Indicate days per school) To be determined with the input of each high school principal	
Suggest multiple dates on which you will be available to come to each school. Flexible scheduling with the input of each high school principal	
Describe the content of the instrument(s) that will be used: Variables associated with resilience, persistence, and achievement. For example, when confronted with an obstacle, what form of resource do you seek to help redirect your attention to your task?	
Describe how the instrument(s) will be administered: Researcher, along with each Principal, will determine timing, groupings, settings, etc that will be less intrusive to the instructional day.	
State the range of time that similar populations needed to complete the instrument(s): Approximately 25 minutes	
Describe special accommodations, if any, for special populations (e.g. Special Education/ ESOL/ etc.): Not applicable	

State the requirements for staff/teacher participation in terms of time and level of effort, if any:	
Not applicable at this time; however, if need is determined, efforts will be coordinated through the Principal.	
Describe your efforts to reduce impact on student instructional time:	
Coordinate efforts with each Principal to choose appropriate times and determine appropriate settings.	
SELECTION	
Identify target population (number of students or classrooms, grade, age, etc.) :	
African American Males in grades 10 and 11 enrolled in honors and advanced placement classes	
Indicate selection/sampling procedures to be used:	
Rank order according to criteria of inclusion in advanced placement, honors, and grade point average	
Describe intended data analysis procedures:	
DISSEMINATION	
Where will the data and/or report be published?	
University of Maryland, College Park, Maryland	
Describe your efforts to ensure confidentiality:	
I will follow the guidelines described by the Charles County Public School System as it relates to student confidentiality.	
Describe your efforts to ensure that all data, analysis, and final report are shared with R&A, school principal(s), staff, and other affected parties:	
Upon completion of dissertation, I will notify R&A and all other interested personnel that I would be willing to discuss findings.	
ADDITIONAL REQUESTS SPECIFIC TO THIS PROJECT	
(Additional requests, if any, will be included in this section)	
Please attach the following:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Copy of all instruments to be used, in their final form • Parent permission forms for all students who will participate • Any other pertinent information that was not requested above 	
Signature of Researcher:	Date Submitted:

Appendix B
Permission from the Human Subjects Review Committee

UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND, COLLEGE PARK
HUMAN SUBJECTS REVIEW COMMITTEE (HSRC)
Departmental Application for Review of Research Using Human Subjects

Please check one: ☐ Initial Application ☐ Renewal Application

Name of Principal Investigator or Project Faculty Advisor Thomas Weible Tel. No. 405-358
(NOT a student or fellow; must be UMD employee)

Name of Co-Investigator _____ Tel. No. _____

Administering Department of Project Education Policy & Leadership

E-Mail Address of P.I. tweible@umd.edu E-Mail Address of Co-I. _____

Where should IRB send approval letter? 2115 Benjamin Building

Name of Student Investigator Linda Delois Salley Tel. No. 301-743-5

Student Identification No. & E-Mail Address 229-74-1777 LSalley@ccbpe.com

Name of Student's Advisor (if different from above) _____
Signature of Student's Advisor _____

Project Duration (mo/yr - mo/yr) 9/03 - 6/04

Project Title _____

Sponsored Project Data	Funding Agency <u>N/A</u>	ORAA Proposal ID Number
------------------------	---------------------------	-------------------------

(PLEASE NOTE: Failure to include data above may result in delay of processing sponsored research award at ORAA.)

CONFLICT OF INTEREST: Investigators ☐ do ☐ do not have a real or potential COI. See question #7 on page 2.

MEMBERS OF HEALTH CENTER: Investigators ☐ are ☐ are not members of Health Center. See question #8 on page 2.

For initial application, please attach a copy of your responses to question 1 - 8 of the instructions on page 2 of this document, including all related documents (such as questionnaires, interview questions, surveys).

OPTIONAL: Complete appropriate box below to indicate whether you are requesting an exemption from further human subjects review and to list the number of any exemption categories (described on page 4 of this document) which you believe applies to your project: ☒ Exempt—List Exemption Category Numbers 1, 2, 3 Or ☐ Non-Exempt

If exempt, please briefly describe the reason(s) for exemption. Your notation is simply a suggestion to the HSRC.
Research involves children but poses no risk to participants.

11/7/03 _____
Date Signature of Principal Investigator or Faculty Advisor (PLEASE NOTE: Person signing above accepts responsibility for project, even when data collection is performed by other investigators)

Date Signature of Co-Principal Investigator

November 5, 2003 Linda Delois Salley
Date Signature of Student Investigator

11-18-03 Robert G. Simon: EDPL HSRC, Chair
Date Signature of Human Subjects Review Committee Chairperson or Designee.

(Please also print name of person signing above)
(PLEASE NOTE: When HSRC Chairperson is also a project investigator or the Student Investigator's advisor, this line should be signed by another member of the HSRC.)

(rev 11/03)

* PLEASE ATTACH THIS COVER PAGE TO EACH SET OF COPIES*

* SEND (3) COPIES WITH ONE CONTAINING ORIGINAL SIGNATURES *

You may send e-mail to irb@deans.umd.edu to inquire about the status of applications delivered to the IRB.



UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

Reference: IRB HSR Identification Number 03-0474

2100 Lee Building
College Park, Maryland 20742-5121
301.405.4212 TEL 301.314.1475 FAX

December 2, 2003

MEMORANDUM

Notice of Results of Final Review by IRB on HSR Application

TO: Dr. Thomas Weible
Ms. Linda Delois Salley
Department of Education Policy & Leadership

FROM: Dr. Phylis Moser-Veillon, Co-Chairperson
Dr. Marc Rogers, Co-Chairperson
Institutional Review Board

PROJECT ENTITLED:

"Exploring the Relationship between Personal Motivation, Persistence and Resilience and their Effects on Academic Achievement among Different Groups of African-American Males in High Schools"

The Institutional Review Board (IRB) concurs with the departmental Human Subjects Review Committee's (HSRC's) preliminary review of the application concerning the above referenced project. The IRB has approved the application and the research involving human subjects described therein. We ask that any future communications with our office regarding this research reference the IRB HSR identification number indicated above.

We also ask that you not make any changes to the approved protocol without first notifying and obtaining the approval of the IRB. Also, please report any deviations from the approved protocol to the Chairperson of your departmental HSRC. If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact us at irb@deans.umd.edu. Thank you.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION REGARDING IRB/HSRC APPROVALS

EXPIRATION OF IRB APPROVAL—Approval of non-exempt projects expires one year after the official date of IRB approval; approval of exempt projects expires three years after that date. If you expect to be collecting or analyzing data after the expiration of IRB approval, please contact the HSRC Chairperson in your department about submitting a renewal application. **(PLEASE NOTE: If you are not collecting data from human subjects and any on-going data analysis does not increase the risk to subjects, a renewal application would not be necessary.)**

STUDENT RESEARCHERS—Unless otherwise requested, the IRB will send copies of approval paperwork to the supervising faculty researcher (or advisor) of a project. We ask that such persons pass on that paperwork or a copy to any student researchers working on that project. That paperwork may be needed by students in order to apply for graduation. **PLEASE BE ADVISED THAT THE IRB MAY NOT BE ABLE TO PROVIDE COPIES OF THAT PAPERWORK, particularly if several years have passed since the date of the original approval.**

Enclosures (where appropriate), will include stamped copy of informed consent forms included in application and any copies of the application not needed by the IRB; copies of this memorandum and any consent forms

Appendix C
Permission from the Parents of the Study Students

EXPLORING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PERSONAL MOTIVATION,
PERSISTENCE, AND RESILIENCE AND THEIR EFFECTS ON ACADEMIC
ACHIEVEMENT AMONG DIFFERENT GROUPS OF AFRICAN-AMERICAN
MALES IN HIGH SCHOOLS

I, _____, give permission for my son, _____,
(Parent's name)
age _____, to participate in a research study being conducted by Linda Delois Salley under the
supervision of Dr. Thomas Weible in the Department of Education Policy and Leadership at the
University of Maryland, College Park.

The purpose of this research is to investigate the extent to which differences in motivation,
persistence, and resilience exist between two groups of academically achieving African-
American males with similar abilities.

The procedure involves one session of 20 to 30 minutes, during which academically achieving
students in advanced, honors, and general track courses will complete an Achievement
Motivation Profile.

All information collected in this study is confidential to the extent permitted by law. I
understand that the data students provide will be grouped with data others provide for reporting
and presentation and that their names will not be used.

There are no risks to students who participate in the study.

The study is not designed to help students personally, but to help learn more about achievement
among academically achieving African-American males. Students and their parents are free to
ask questions or to withdraw from participation at any time and without penalty.

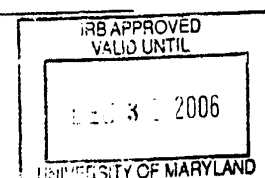
Linda Delois Salley, Instructional Specialist for Charles County Public Schools
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If you have questions about your rights as a research subject or wish to report a research-related injury,
please contact: Institutional Review Board Office, University of Maryland, College Park, Maryland,
20742; (e-mail) irb@deans.umd.edu; (telephone 301-405-4212).

Name of Subject _____

Signature of Subject _____ /Date _____

Signature of Parent _____ /Date _____



Appendix D

AMP Answer Sheet Sample



02009

PLEASE DO NOT WRITE IN THIS AREA

IMPORTANT: Enter this number on Transmittal Form when submitting for scoring.

Reserved for WPS use only

WPS TEST REPORT™

Western Psychological Services • 12031 Wilshire Blvd. • Los Angeles, CA 90025-1251

AMP Answer Sheet

Jotham G. Friedland, Ph.D., Sander I. Marcus, Ph.D., and Harvey P. Mandel, Ph.D.

Directions

Use only a black-leaded pencil (No. 2 or softer). Make dark, heavy marks that fill the circles. If you want to change an answer, erase your first mark. Then fill in the circle that shows your new choice. Do not make stray marks on either side of this Answer Sheet.

Correct
● ● ●

Incorrect
● × ●

First fill in the background information. For *Student ID Number*, *Administration Date*, *Age*, and *Examiner ID Number*, write the numbers in the boxes above the circles, then darken the circles. If you don't know your ID number or the examiner's, ask your examiner about them. Read each statement with care. Then fill in the circle that shows your answer. Fill in only one circle for each statement.

The purpose of the AMP is to describe your perceptions of yourself and your motivations on a typical day. The AMP consists of 140 statements that can be true in describing you, false in describing you, or somewhere in between. For each statement, fill in the circle that corresponds to your response on this Answer Sheet as follows:

- Answer 1 if the statement is ALWAYS TRUE.
Answer 2 if the statement is MOSTLY TRUE.
Answer 3 if the statement is SOMETIMES TRUE AND SOMETIMES FALSE.
Answer 4 if the statement is MOSTLY FALSE.
Answer 5 if the statement is ALWAYS FALSE.

There are no right or wrong answers. Just answer as accurately as possible. Please answer ALL items.

Student ID Number										Administration Date		
										Month	Day	Year
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6
7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7
8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8
9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9

Examiner ID Number									
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6
7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7
8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8
9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9

Name of School: _____

Examiner's Name: _____

Age	Gender	Grade/Year	Ethnicity
0	Male	<7	Asian
1	Female	7	Black
2		8	Hispanic
3		9	Native American
4		>16	White
5			Other
6			
7			
8			
9			

1 - ALWAYS TRUE 2 - MOSTLY TRUE 3 - SOMETIMES TRUE AND SOMETIMES FALSE 4 - MOSTLY FALSE 5 - ALWAYS FALSE

There are no right or wrong answers. Just answer as accurately as possible. Please answer ALL items.

1 2 3 4 5	1. I like working outdoors.	1 2 3 4 5	16. Throughout my life I have kept up with my peers socially.
1 2 3 4 5	2. I worry about decisions I have made.	1 2 3 4 5	17. Others respect me.
1 2 3 4 5	3. I am at ease talking to people.	1 2 3 4 5	18. I hide my feelings.
1 2 3 4 5	4. I am nervous.	1 2 3 4 5	19. I like my work.
1 2 3 4 5	5. People like me.	1 2 3 4 5	20. I have a wide range of interests.
1 2 3 4 5	6. I am happy.	1 2 3 4 5	21. I like(d) school.
1 2 3 4 5	7. I am afraid of being rejected.	1 2 3 4 5	22. I like to draw or sketch.
1 2 3 4 5	8. I am as happy as others.	1 2 3 4 5	23. I find life boring.
1 2 3 4 5	9. I take risks.	1 2 3 4 5	24. I am easily discouraged.
1 2 3 4 5	10. I am a workaholic.	1 2 3 4 5	25. I feel bad about thoughts I have.
1 2 3 4 5	11. I am sociable and outgoing.	1 2 3 4 5	26. I find I am depressed for no reason at all.
1 2 3 4 5	12. I finish what I start.	1 2 3 4 5	27. I like this period of my life.
1 2 3 4 5	13. I am sarcastic.	1 2 3 4 5	28. My success is up to me.
1 2 3 4 5	14. I plan for the future.	1 2 3 4 5	29. I give my time, energy, and/or resources to others in need.
1 2 3 4 5	15. I say what I feel.	1 2 3 4 5	30. I like to advise or counsel people.

1 - ALWAYS TRUE 2 - MOSTLY TRUE 3 - SOMETIMES TRUE AND SOMETIMES FALSE 4 - MOSTLY FALSE 5 - ALWAYS FALSE

There are no right or wrong answers. Just answer as accurately as possible. Please answer ALL items.

- | | | | |
|-----------|---|-----------|---|
| 1 2 3 4 5 | 31. I have a good memory. | 1 2 3 4 5 | 87. I trust others. |
| 1 2 3 4 5 | 32. I am shy. | 1 2 3 4 5 | 88. I am willing to compromise. |
| 1 2 3 4 5 | 33. I try to do my best. | 1 2 3 4 5 | 89. I like to fix or repair things. |
| 1 2 3 4 5 | 34. I feel guilty. | 1 2 3 4 5 | 90. When I make a promise, I keep it. |
| 1 2 3 4 5 | 35. I have initiative. | 1 2 3 4 5 | 91. I feel like I'm "just going through the motions." |
| 1 2 3 4 5 | 36. I trust myself. | 1 2 3 4 5 | 92. I work hard. |
| 1 2 3 4 5 | 37. I argue with people I care about. | 1 2 3 4 5 | 93. I am satisfied with who I am. |
| 1 2 3 4 5 | 38. My moods change. | 1 2 3 4 5 | 94. I believe most people care for each other. |
| 1 2 3 4 5 | 39. I make new friends easily. | 1 2 3 4 5 | 95. I learn(ed) quickly in school. |
| 1 2 3 4 5 | 40. I am argumentative. | 1 2 3 4 5 | 96. I hurt people I love. |
| 1 2 3 4 5 | 41. I get blamed for things I didn't do. | 1 2 3 4 5 | 97. I am lonely. |
| 1 2 3 4 5 | 42. I am able to manipulate others. | 1 2 3 4 5 | 98. I like a career in which things are always changing. |
| 1 2 3 4 5 | 43. I like to risk starting and managing new activities. | 1 2 3 4 5 | 99. I like to express myself through writing. |
| 1 2 3 4 5 | 44. I achieve(d) in school. | 1 2 3 4 5 | 100. I get up easily in the morning. |
| 1 2 3 4 5 | 45. I enjoy learning how things work. | 1 2 3 4 5 | 101. I do things to attract attention. |
| 1 2 3 4 5 | 46. I have close friends. | 1 2 3 4 5 | 102. I have friends of the opposite sex. |
| 1 2 3 4 5 | 47. I wonder what people are thinking about me. | 1 2 3 4 5 | 103. I like writing letters or reports. |
| 1 2 3 4 5 | 48. I worry about what I am going to do with the rest of my life. | 1 2 3 4 5 | 104. I am a changing and growing human being. |
| 1 2 3 4 5 | 49. I feel that I am a successful person. | 1 2 3 4 5 | 105. I have lots of energy. |
| 1 2 3 4 5 | 50. I am easily manipulated by others. | 1 2 3 4 5 | 106. I feel stress or pressure. |
| 1 2 3 4 5 | 51. I like to sell. | 1 2 3 4 5 | 107. I have close friends of the same sex. |
| 1 2 3 4 5 | 52. Throughout my life I have kept up with my peers academically. | 1 2 3 4 5 | 108. I work well with others. |
| 1 2 3 4 5 | 53. I am sensitive to others' feelings. | 1 2 3 4 5 | 109. I am critical of others. |
| 1 2 3 4 5 | 54. I can concentrate well. | 1 2 3 4 5 | 110. I resent being told what to do. |
| 1 2 3 4 5 | 55. I lose interest in things. | 1 2 3 4 5 | 111. I like to be left alone to "do my own thing." |
| 1 2 3 4 5 | 56. I am easy to get along with. | 1 2 3 4 5 | 112. My attention wanders. |
| 1 2 3 4 5 | 57. I have stepped on others to get ahead. | 1 2 3 4 5 | 113. I am afraid of being blamed or punished. |
| 1 2 3 4 5 | 58. I am optimistic. | 1 2 3 4 5 | 114. Time pressures bother me. |
| 1 2 3 4 5 | 59. I waste time. | 1 2 3 4 5 | 115. I am bothered when I see others perform better than I do. |
| 1 2 3 4 5 | 60. I get depressed easily. | 1 2 3 4 5 | 116. I get so nervous I can hardly function. |
| 1 2 3 4 5 | 61. I am able to love. | 1 2 3 4 5 | 117. I am pessimistic. |
| 1 2 3 4 5 | 62. I am aggressive. | 1 2 3 4 5 | 118. I like to work. |
| 1 2 3 4 5 | 63. I have confidence in myself. | 1 2 3 4 5 | 119. I like to work with numbers. |
| 1 2 3 4 5 | 64. I am afraid of failing. | 1 2 3 4 5 | 120. I am lucky. |
| 1 2 3 4 5 | 65. I get what I want. | 1 2 3 4 5 | 121. I am lazy. |
| 1 2 3 4 5 | 66. I have become depressed for weeks at a time. | 1 2 3 4 5 | 122. I feel competent. |
| 1 2 3 4 5 | 67. I sleep very well. | 1 2 3 4 5 | 123. My friends have done well in school. |
| 1 2 3 4 5 | 68. I like to compete. | 1 2 3 4 5 | 124. When I take on new responsibilities, I follow through and complete them. |
| 1 2 3 4 5 | 69. I get angry. | 1 2 3 4 5 | 125. I believe I am intelligent. |
| 1 2 3 4 5 | 70. I like to speak in front of a group. | 1 2 3 4 5 | 126. I find it easy to relax. |
| 1 2 3 4 5 | 71. I am capable of leadership. | 1 2 3 4 5 | 127. I am "right on course" in attaining my career goals. |
| 1 2 3 4 5 | 72. I am well organized. | 1 2 3 4 5 | 128. I lie to protect people. |
| 1 2 3 4 5 | 73. I am capable of creativity. | 1 2 3 4 5 | 129. I get "good reviews" at work. |
| 1 2 3 4 5 | 74. I think clearly. | 1 2 3 4 5 | 130. My grades in school reflect(ed) my abilities. |
| 1 2 3 4 5 | 75. My temper gets out of hand. | 1 2 3 4 5 | 131. I am able to influence others to my way of thinking. |
| 1 2 3 4 5 | 76. I am self-conscious. | 1 2 3 4 5 | 132. I can solve problems in many areas. |
| 1 2 3 4 5 | 77. I am jealous of others. | 1 2 3 4 5 | 133. I can handle stress or pressure. |
| 1 2 3 4 5 | 78. People talk about me behind my back. | 1 2 3 4 5 | 134. I apply my energies consistently to study or to work. |
| 1 2 3 4 5 | 79. I am money-motivated. | 1 2 3 4 5 | 135. I am emotionally stable. |
| 1 2 3 4 5 | 80. I believe that life is a big game to be played to win. | 1 2 3 4 5 | 136. I let others influence my decisions. |
| 1 2 3 4 5 | 81. I've "got my act together." | 1 2 3 4 5 | 137. I like crossword puzzles, chess, bridge, or other "thinking" games. |
| 1 2 3 4 5 | 82. To me the future looks good. | 1 2 3 4 5 | 138. I get my work in on time. |
| 1 2 3 4 5 | 83. I understand my feelings. | 1 2 3 4 5 | 139. Others perceive me as being competent. |
| 1 2 3 4 5 | 84. I want to be the best. | 1 2 3 4 5 | 140. I get to appointments on time. |
| 1 2 3 4 5 | 85. I procrastinate. | | |
| 1 2 3 4 5 | 86. There are people I can depend on. | | |

Appendix E

Interview Questions

Interview Questions

1. Who has been most influential in your academic career?

Probes

- a. How has this person influenced you in your academic career?
- b. How often do you have contact with this person?
- c. What kinds of advice or things has this person shared or done for you that have helped you to be successful?

2. Name someone outside your immediate family who was most influential in your academic career.

Probes

- a. How has this person influenced you in your academic career?
- b. How often do you have contact with this person?
- c. What kinds of advice or things has this person shared or done for you that have helped you to be successful?

3. Were you ever accused of being a nerd, acting white or not being cool by your peers?

Probes

- a. How did it make you feel?
- b. What did you think of being accused of being a nerd, not being cool or acting white?
- c. How did you handle or overcome the event?
- d. Was there time when you tried to hide or minimize your success? Why or why not?

4. What is the highest level of education you plan to complete beyond high school?

Probes

- a. How is your educational pursuit tied to your future?
- b. What are you doing to achieve your academic goal?
- c. What, if any, obstacles do you foresee?
- d. What are your plans to overcome the obstacles? (human, technical, resources, etc.)

5. Do you believe you were always on the road to academic success?

Probes

- a. What do you believe is the center of your success?
- b. How has or have your belief(s) helped you?
- c. What are the benefits?
- d. Are there drawbacks to your belief(s)? Elaborate

6. What choices did you need to make along the way that led to your academic achievement?

Probes

- a. What challenges did you face?
- b. How did you handle these challenges?
- c. What were the results of the challenges?
- d. How did you feel about the challenges and how you handled them?
- e. How has your performance in handling them helped you to continue your academic success?

7. Please describe the most important experience, event or turning point that contributed to your academic success in as much detail as possible.

Probes

- a. How did the event make you feel?
- b. How did it make you act (differently) (if appropriate)?
- c. What specific person or people were involved directly or indirectly?
What did they do specifically?
- d. Beside academic success, what other effects does it have on you now?
- e. What did you learn from it? (Describe in detail)

8. How did you balance social, extracurricular and academic interest (e.g., conflicting demands) in high school?

Probes

- a. How did you use your time?
- b. What kinds of decisions did you have to make?
- c. How did you handle personal demands, family demand, other commitments, etc?

9. What types of academic problems did you experience in high school?

Probes

- a. Who helped you through your academic problems?
- b. How did this person or people help you?
- c. What did you personally do to alleviate the problem?

10. What stands out as most significant in getting you this far in your education?

Probes

- a. How did you keep focus?
- b. Where did you get support?

11. So many talented youth, especially African-American males and youth of other ethnic backgrounds, do not make it academically.

Probes

- a. Why do you think you have done so well? Please be specific.
- b. What advice would you give them?

12. Are there any points you'd like to make about being an academically successful African-American male that we have not covered?

Matching Questions to Variables

- 1. Who has been most influential in your academic career? Motivation
- 2. Name someone outside your immediate family who was most influential in your academic career. Motivation
- 3. Were you ever accused of being a nerd, acting white or not being cool by peers? Motivation
- 4. What is the highest level of education you plan to complete beyond high school? Motivation
- 5. Do you believe you were always on the road to academic success? Motivation
- 6. What choices did you need to make along the way that led to your academic achievement? Persistence

7. Please describe the most important experience, event or turning point that contributed to your academic success in as much detail as possible. Resilience
8. How did you balance social, extracurricular and academic interest, (e.g., conflicting demands) in high school? Persistence and Resilience
9. What types of academic problems did you experience in high school? Persistence
10. What stands out as most significant in getting you this far in your education? Persistence and Resilience
11. So many talented youth, especially African American males and youth of other ethnic backgrounds, do not make it academically. Motivation, Persistence and Resilience
12. Are there any points you'd like to make about being an academically successful African-American male that we have not covered? Is there any advice you can give to assist me in helping other African-American males to become academically successful?

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